

ITALY, LIBAN and IRAN

A Travelogue of two Trips

Chabab
Dleat 1988

MAR APREM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem (formerly George Mookken) was born in Trichur, Kerala, India, in June 1940. Educated in India, England, and America, he specialised in the field of Church History. He was the President of the Church History Association of India.

He holds two master's degree in Church History, one from the United Theological College, Bangalore (M. Th, of Serampore, 1966) and the other from the Union Theological Seminary, New York (S. T. M. degree, 1967). He was a candidate for Doctor of Theology (Th. D.) degree at Princeton Theological Seminary, U. S. A. when he was made bishop in Bagdad, Iraq in 1968. Later he earned his D. Th. degree from Serampore University, near Calcutta.

Ordained a deacon on June 25, 1961, he became a priest on the day he completed twenty five years of age on 13 June, 1965. He was consecrated Bishop on 21st September, 1968 and promoted as a Metropolitan eight days later in Bagdad.

His Biography appears in the International Who's Who of intellectuals, Vol. 6, Cambridge. The International directory of distinguished leadership, first Edition, U. S. A. and others.

He was given "Men of Achievement" Award of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England in 1984. and the 'Medal of Merit' of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Centre, Venice for his cultural and ecumenical achievements.

Since 1968 He is the Head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Trichur. He is active in several religious and social organisations all over India.

ITALY, LIBAN & IRAN

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ITALY, LIBAN & IRAN

*A Travelogue of two tours in Three countries
in October 1997 and March 1998*

MAR APREM

Thrissur, India
1998

ITALY, LIBAN and IRAN

(English) Travelogue

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DETAILED OUTLINE

Chapter 1

ITALY (*Pages 15-29*)

Kuwait Airways Flight from Trivandrum on 21 Oct 1997. Connection to Rome. Trains from the airport. Ambassador Fabian's remarks. Pope John Paul II. Thieves in Rome. St. Peters, Michael Angelo. Mark Twain's "The Roman Guide."

Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue. 3rd Meeting Msgr. Duprey. The themes of the 3rd meeting. Six members from each delegation. A nun from Angamalee. Umbrellas. Goods stolen belong to the son-in-law of Sonia Gandhi.

Chapter 2

LEBANON (*Pages 30-57*)

2nd March 1998. New Delhi to Bahrain and then to Beirut by Gulf Air. Announcement in the aircraft. VIP lounge. Archbishop Boulos Matar of Beirut. St. Cherbil at Annaya.

Qurbana on 3rd March 98. Many pilgrims visit the tomb of St. Cherbyl. Pro Oriente meeting over. Qasha Saper Khamees and Qasha Yathron.

Modern Syriac Bible re-printed in 1993 by the Bible Society of Lebanon. Useful references and dates in this Syriac Bible. Four Churches and three priests. Sisters of Mother Teresa. Our Lady of Lebanon at Harissa. Tall statue on a pedestal of 20 meters.

The Literary History of the Assyrians by Pera Sarmas.

Colloquial Syriac by R. Hart. The 100 by Michael H. Heart. Ranking of influential persons in history. Mahatma Gandhi is not included in the top 100. Qurbana on 8 March 1998. Mar Bawai translated my sermon. Mahatma Gandhi included in the top 100 personalities of TIME, dated April 13, 1998. Religious channel.

Cardinal Sefr. Prime Minister Hariri. Yonan Warda. Problem of cooks. Return journey. Modern Syriac Language. Daily newspapers. Petrol Problem. 35,000 American troops. Anser Travel. News about India. Sonia Gandhi's picture on TV. C.N.N. Mathew Eapen, L.B.C. Reemi, cousin of Bishop Bawai. Doha, transit.

Chapter 3

TEHRAN (*Pages 58-71*)

10 March 1998 Tehran. Mr. Shimshoon Maksoodpur, Corepiscopa Dumara, Qasha Joseph, Qasha Ashur. Pavilion. 15 March 1998 Qurbana at Mar Geevarghese Cathedral. Marth Mariyam Church. Friday 20th March Qurbana. The Church was full. Mr. Shimon Maksoodpur translated my sermon. History of the Church. 3 bishops in Uroomiah 120 years ago. 33 thousand members in the three dioceses of Mar Yonan, Mar Yohannan and Mar Goriel.

Hudra copied in Alkaye in Iran 1611 A.D. kept in Trichur. Mar Yohanna Elia Mellus. Patriarch Mar Joseph Audo VI. Corepiscopa Dumara. Archdeacon Abraham Askaro.

Rabbi Maryam Amirkhas. Alice Eshoye. To translate my book Nestorian Missions to Farsee. Ecclesiastes Chapter 11 verse 1. Inequality between boys and girls at the time of baptism. Mrs. Mary Roy.

The palaces of Reza Shah. Summer Palace. Sade abad. Tomb of Imam Khomeini. Taj Mahal of India.

Burial place of Christians. Cemetery locked. Kundur (incense) and prayers at the tomb of Mrs. Panna, mother of H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch. She had passed away in 1968 in Tehran. Tall tomb. Ladies of the Church known as Marathe. Diabetes food. Lent. Trying to speak with the ladies. *Raodhana* earthquake.

Visits in Tehran. Friday noon prayers in front of the University. Assyrian Presbyterian Church, Brethren Assembly. U.S. embassy in Tehran is now a school for revolutionary Guards. Agrees Abdi.

Colloquial Syriac printed in the Assyrian Press in Mosul in 1926.

Many Assyrian words in transliteration and English translation.
Farsee numerals similar to Hindi or Urdu.

Chapter 4

OROOMIAH (*Pages 72-88*)

Marth Mariyam Church one of the oldest Churches in the world. The tomb of one of the three wise men (magi). No icons.

In 643 A.D. a Chinese princess came to Oroomiah. Marco Polo visited this Church in the 14th century.

Russian missionaries helped to renew the front of the Church at the end of the 19th century. They presented a big gong to this old Church.

Abraham Jackson of Columbia University, New York city visited Uroomiah in 1903 and wrote his travelogue. In 1908 Ottoman troops conquered the city.

Since 1992 Assyrians who began to return to Urmiah. The Assyrians in the USA helped financially to re-build the Church. The Church. National relic. In 1912 Abraham Odisho of Gavilan donated a big gong.

In 1834 J. Perkins resided here. A.J. Maclean in 1886 was here. Mar Poulos Shimun Patriarch was consecrated here in 1918.

Deacon Isha, brother of Patriarch Mar Ruwel Shimun. Mar Yohanna. Bishop Mar Elia Ebrahami Armodaghaj died in 1934. No bishop in Iran till February 1962.

Chaldean Archbishop Mar Thoma Meram in Urmia. List of the clergy in Tehran and Urmia. Former clergy and deacons.

Iraq-Iran war (1980-88). Bishops in 1842.

The statistics of the Assyrian Church in 1877. Patriarch Mar Ruwel Shimun had one Metropolitan and five bishops.

Mar Thoma baptised many people in Lake Urmia in 32 A.D. The names of village Churches.

Death of Mar Poulouse 24 March 1998. V.I.P. pavilion.

FOREWORD

Mar Aprem, the tireless bishop of the Chaldean Syrian archdiocese of Thrissur in Kerala, whose many travels have been chronicled by himself with admirable promptitude and published with equally admirable exactitude by the Mar Narsai Press, has done it again! The number of his books has now equalled that of the weeks in the year.

The present chronicle describes two tours in October 1997 and March 1998, which took this learned and whimsical prelate to Italy, the Lebanon and Iran. Mar Aprem prefers the French name of the second country in his title and makes rhyme with Iran. His visits to the Syriac Churches of 'Liban', Tehran and Oroomiah are lavishly illustrated in 23 pages of colour photographs.

His travels in the Lebanon include an account of the tomb of St. Sharbel at Annaya, near Beirut. This saint, whose canonisation is of recent date, is revered not only by the Maronites, but also the Melkites (Greek Catholics) and perhaps by others in the Middle East, or wherever Middle Eastern Catholics have settled. The icons show a bearded monk with his eyes cast down, and almost closed. Most Eastern icons exaggerate the wideness of the eyes, so this is evidence of the influence of western art.

The Maronites of the Lebanon, as this example shows, have a number of identities, one of which is firmly directed towards the west, especially to Rome.

Long ago the faraway Syriac Churches of Iraq, Iran and even China started making overtures to the Pope in Rome. After

all, their dyophysitic christology, when correctly understood (the idea that it is 'heretical' is now discredited), comes very close to that espoused by Rome in fifth century A.D.

Today, one and a half millennia after the Church of the East began to emerge as a separate entity, destined to make history as a Nestorian Church (whatever the rights and wrongs of this 'misnomer'), agreement exists on the nature of Christian Faith between the great churches of the erstwhile twin empires of Persia and of Rome. A common declaration on Christology was signed in the Vatican by Pope John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV in November 1994. Not long afterwards the Assyrian Church (as it is now called) joined the Middle East Council of Churches as a partner of the 'Catholic' family.

Mar Aprem, following the steps of Rabban Sawma in the thirteenth century, chronicles his visit to Italy and comments on the dialogue between his Church and that of Rome.

It is always a pleasure and an entertaining pastime to read a new book by a prolific Metropolitan of Thrissur. As I write this, recommending the experience to others, the thirtieth anniversary of his episcopate is approaching fast. That makes him the longest serving Head of a Christian denomination in India, unless I am mistaken. I take this opportunity to offer him my warm congratulations.

Kottayam, Kerala

21 Sept 1998

Andrew Palmer

PREFACE

Italy, Liban and Iran is a travelogue of two tours in Oct 97 and March 98. This is my 52nd book. At the time of typing the manuscript the *Kraisthava Sahitya Academy* (Christian Literary Academy) in Kerala honoured me with the highest award, 'Dr. William Carey National Award' which was presented at Trichur, my hometown, on April 14, 1998. This was a challenge for me to improve the literary quality of my writings.

The well known personalities in the literary world have literary assistants and editors, for improving the quality of the books with an eye on the saleability. A well known writer said recently to an Indian novelist, "This is a very good novel. But if you can just expand it to about double the length and if we rewrite the language to make it much more literary, and oh, put in some riot scenes, good descriptive passages, mentions of Hindi films and festivals, I think I could sell it for you for a decent advance." (Ashok Banker, *THE WEEK*, Jan 25, 1998. p.63).

It is not the decent advance I am concerned about, but the quality of my books. I have mentioned about Hindi films, Iran-Iraq War, Ayatollah Khomeini, St. Cherbyl of Lebanon, ancient Churches in Oroomiyah, Iran etc. I pray God to make my books useful to my readers.

The urge in me is that which makes me to write. A lot of information is passed on through these travelogues to those who cannot afford to travel. Even those who are globe-trotters should find these travelogues useful. Many tourists miss the holy shrines in the towns and cities they pass through.

Like Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy of Booker fame one young writer Kiran Desai is attracting attention of the literary world in India by her debut novel '*Strange Happenings in a Goa Orchard*.' Her mother Anita Desai is a well known name in Indian English literature. But my mother who passed away on 27 December 1997 had no interest in novels as she had to take care of her own ten children and twenty grandchildren in addition to many in the M.T.M. orphanage.

I am not going to sit and cry saying that there was no literary taste in my family. Perhaps it may be my privilege to give that to the next generation in our family or to my friends.

Commenting on the interest shown in the western world in Indian books in recent years Ashok Banker in *The Week*, the well known English Weekly, published from Kerala, jubilantly claims :

“As the millennium draws to a close, the wheel of history has turned full circle. Indian writers have taken over the British Empire. We *are* the Raj!”

This is not a mere travelogue. It is not a treatise on Church history. It is both and perhaps more. It is the readers who assess the worth of what they read. Ordinary details in this book may be extraordinary mine of information to the reader.

My gratitude to all those who showed extraordinary kindness to me during my travels. My brief acquaintance has been happy and faithful enough to cherish in our history for many years to come.

How enriched and better informed I feel after a visit to Beyrouth after 36 years or to Tehran for the first time. How instantly I learned a few words in Farsee language. My promise

that I would attempt to speak more words in their language when I visit them next is a sincere wish. But a Metropolitan with multifarious responsibilities cannot indulge in the luxury of being fully devoted to the gigantic task of learning the languages of the people he meets.

A turnover of Rs.110 million is claimed by *crossword* chain of bookstores in Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Delhi. It is a fantastic amount for books. One method of promoting sales is to create controversy on some issues or to use cute linguistic gymnastics.

English is taught in schools in India. As for the pronunciation is concerned even the English-medium schools are not succeeding in getting the Indian students to pronounce properly.

The much talked about novel of Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things*, P. 275 where the six-year-old son of comrade Pillai recites the speech of Mark Anthony.

“I cometoberry Caesar, not to praise him.

Theevil that mendoo lives after them,

The goodisoft interred with their bones”,

The novel goes on to remark:

“He shouted it fluently, without faltering once. Remarkable, considering he was only six and didn’t understand a word of what he was saying.”

I often wonder whether my listeners understand my Kerala accent when I speak English. Especially because of my over-speed. Having exposed to travel and stay in English-speaking nations, I know I have improved slightly. Yet many of my countrymen are

still pitiable under- developed in the art of speaking in a language not known to his father or mother.

Lots of facts and figures about these countries are packed in these few pages. It is the hope and prayer of the writer that many readers may be enriched in their knowledge by the reading of the following pages. The readers can conveniently browse through the pages of this little book not only in the comforts of their bed rooms but also in their journey by trains or in the air.

My gratitude is to the Mar Narsai Publications and many others who helped me. Our church members in Iran and Lebanon sent me colour photographs printed in this book.

Dr. Andrew Palmer of the School of Oriental & African Studies of the University of London wrote a foreword to this book on a short notice, while he was at SEERI, Kottayam for the 4th World Syriac Conference. It was by his interest that I was privileged to play SITAR at the Syrian Indian festival in London on my birthday when I completed 55 years of age in June 1995. Thus I fulfilled my promise that one day I would play Sitar publicly in London in some Dining Hall, if not at the Royal Albert Hall.

Thrissur

29 September 1998

Mar Aprem

CHAPTER I

ITALY

My flight left Trivandrum at 7.50 a.m. on 21 October 1997. After flying for 5 hours we reached Kuwait airport at 12.50. When it was about 1 noon in India the time at Kuwait was only 10.30 a.m. as Kuwait was 2½ hours behind India. Our flight to Rome (KU 167) was to depart at 11.30 a.m. and the transit time was only one hour. We had to go to transfer counter without delay to get a new boarding pass to Rome. These counters are often very crowded and everybody wants to get their boarding pass without any delay. Moreover there are several flights. Passengers queue up in the wrong queue. Hence there is a confusion and complaints from passengers. I rushed to the transfer counter as I got out of the aircraft quickly. I was allotted seat in the first row of the economy class passengers which was row number 9. The first eight rows of seats were for the executive class passengers.

My luggage was checked direct to Rome. If I were to wait for the luggage and identify it in Kuwait or re-check them again it could add to the strain of the journey. Some airlines issue the boarding passes for both journeys. It is easy as it is the same airline which issues both boarding passes. With the facilities of computers it is not at all a problem. I hope that all Airlines should adopt this practice and reduce the trouble of the travel. If the passenger does not know English or Arabic it may be difficult to find the right counter and obtain fresh boarding pass.

Security check is a must. Although Indian security men have checked us in Trivandrum it is the duty of the police in

Kuwait to re-check to find out whether we managed to carry guns or bombs during the flight. Usually being a bishop I get an easy passage through the security-check areas. But if old and less-educated passengers are interrogated by the security police of a foreign country it can be a real ordeal. Sometimes we have to open our brief cases which is not normally done as they are passed through screening monitors. But the TV screen adds to the false alarm.

In a previous journey my hand cross was seen on the screen. The officials thought it was a revolver or something and asked me whether there was any weapon.

Many bishops avoid carrying hand crosses in the travel. I can get a cross in any of our Churches when I have to bless the congregation. Every blessing has a cross. Yes, cross and carrying the cross is an integral part of Christian life.

I had the company of a bishop and a priest with me till Kuwait. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius, the Mar Thoma Bishop of Kottayam, was on a ten day visit to his congregation in Kuwait.

So he headed to the luggage arrival area as soon as we got out at Kuwait. The Syro-Malankara priest of St. Mary's Cathedral in Tiruvalla was headed to Germany. So he moved to another departure gate. We who are going to Rome were gathered at gate No. 24. I think there were no priests in this flight. Even if there were I did not know them. It is not easy to recognize a priest when he is not in clerical uniform. Most of the clergymen travel in civil clothes.

We reached Rome at scheduled time i.e. 4.10 p.m. My watch showed 7.40 p.m. The flight was about 7 hours. That means we were airborne for about 10½ hours. With a halt of about 1½

hours at Kuwait, the total time required for us to reach Rome from Trivandrum was about 12 hours. We left at 7.40 a.m. and reached at 7.40 p.m. according to our watch.

If we had flown direct from Bombay on a non-stop flight to Rome the flight time would have been 8 hours instead of 10½ hours. But from Kerala we have to go to Bombay which means a flight time of 1 hour 40 minutes. But connection from Bombay will be after ten hours or so. While returning from Rome a stay of about 5 hours at night in the airport in Bombay with our baggages is not a pleasant experience.

In Rome I decided to take a train to some destination closer to Vatican and then to hire a taxi. Otherwise it could cost more than US \$100 or 170,000 Italian lira. I asked two Indian friends about railway station. They advised me to take bus rather than train. Because train would not take me near Via Della Scrofa where I was supposed to go.

“Which is the bus taking us close to Vatican area?” I asked the taximen coming forward to help the passengers. Like taximen in India, they replied, “Buses do not go to that side. You better take a taxi.” I brushed aside their advice to hire a taxi. I thought it was a waste of money. Hence I decided to take train.

7,000 lira's ticket was bought. I was asked to get down at East Rome station which was the 5th stop. The journey took about 25 minutes. But I didn't know that I was supposed to validate my ticket by a punching machine somewhere at the platform or inside the train. When the ticket examiner came he pointed out to me that my ticket was not validated. I spoke in English which was difficult for him to follow. My ignorance of

Italian was a blessing. Otherwise he would have fined me for travelling in train without validating the ticket. In India we do not have such duties for the passenger. As a passenger my duty is to buy a ticket. Checking the ticket or punching the ticket is done by the railway staff who are paid for it.

After getting out of the train I moved to the Metro bus. I was told that I would have to change the bus. It was obvious that I couldn't do it easily with my baggage. Even the word 'Via' was pronounced by them in Italian style much different from the English pronunciation. I decided to take a taxi. That cost 11,500 lira which was more than the cost of the train ticket. Still I made it in a total of 18,500 lira, one tenth of the cost for taxi from the airport. Taxi should be avoided if one knew the route and if the luggage was not heavy.

Announcement came over the microphone before we landed in Rome that Kuwait Airways would collect donations for the orphans. The air-hostess distributed envelopes to the passengers willing to give donation for orphans. The envelope has a photo of a boy.

It is called *Balsam* fund.

The envelope states its purpose :

BALSAM means medicine... and balsam is a humanitarian project jointly organized by Kuwait Airways and Kuwait Red Crescent (KRC), intending to provide remedial measures, such as rescue operations and social services, for casualties and prisoners of war, as well as protection for children suffering disadvantages.

The project also aims to facilitate communication for

residents of conflict areas and assist in the exchange of prisoners.

One can participate in these efforts by placing donations of any currency in this envelope.

Rome has an efficiently run bus service. Special tours are arranged. Some tourists prefer motorboat trips in the Tiber. I did not go on any tour. Purchasing ordinary bus tickets I could go from one place to another. One ticket of 1500 lira will be valid for 75 minutes after one starts the journey. If that time expires we have to punch the next ticket. I am not sure all are honest. There is a lot of cheating as there is no checking always. But once a passenger is caught after expiry time of his ticket he will be fined heavily. Heavy fines can perhaps make up for the loss caused by ticketless travelling.

Most visitors to this great city visit Piazza Indipendenza, Piazza della Repubblica, Quirinal Palace (Residence of Italian President), Piazza Venezia, Roman Forum, Colosseum, synagogue, Janiculum hill, St. Peter's Basilica, S. Angel Castel, Piazza Navona, Via Veneto, Piazza Barberini, Trevi Fountain and catacombs. For papal Audience, the Tourist Information Bureau states that we should wear appropriate attire (no shorts, miniskirts or uncovered shoulders).

MIXED COMMITTEE FOR DIALOGUE

The purpose of this visit to Rome was to participate in the Mixed Committee for Dialogue between the Assyrian Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The Secretariat for Christian Unity was in charge of the dialogue as it was held in Rome.

Casa Internazionale de Clero where we stayed was also the venue of the meetings. The room was beautiful and comfortable.

The food too was good. But since I do not eat meat I was supplied cheese or vegetables.

Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon, Mar Bawai Soro, Mar Meelis Zaya of Australia, Kasha William Yakob of Gothburg, Sweden and Rev. George Thoma of New Britain, Connecticut, are the members representing our Church in this Committee since its inception. The first meeting was held in Rome in 1995 and the second, in 1996 in Adma, Lebanon. Now this third meeting was held in October 1997. The Holy Synod held in June 1997 in Chicago had nominated me as a member of the delegation of our Church.

I was not a stranger in Rome. All our delegates are known to me personally. Even in the Catholic delegation Fr. Dr. Mathew Vellanickal, Vicar General of the archdiocese of Chenganachery, Kerala, Fr. Dr. Sarhad Jammo, Vicar General of the Chaldean Catholic Church in the U.S.A. and the leader of their delegation Bishop Duprey were known to me previously. I had met Bishop Duprey way back in 1972 at a conference in Pune, India when he was a priest.

The sessions of the Mixed Committee for Dialogue were cordial. The Committee felt that we needed more studies and discussion on issues such as the Sacraments of the Church etc. We decided to meet in London, England in November 1998 as it was our turn to host the Dialogue alternately. Our delegates are not much experienced in such ecumenical dialogues. But Msgr. Duprey is well versed in this field through his long innings in the Secretariat for Christian Unity in Vatican. Msgr. Duprey was very considerate. He explained that in unity dialogues one side should not insist that the other side should accept exactly

what the first group believes. We should listen to the other side's views and ask if they are similar to our views. The terminology may be different. The essence of faith should be sound and acceptable to both.

On our side I must state Bishop Bawai Soro who is doing his Doctorate in Anglicum in Rome did lead us well and keeping us in proper perspective. English was the medium used without interpreters as we usually have in Pro Oriente in Vienna. I am glad that Bishop Bawai is preparing some books in English which will help western scholars understand our faith.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in Vatican issued invitation for my visa to go to Italy. Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy is the President and Bishop Duprey, the secretary.

The third meeting of the Mixed committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East met in Rome from October 23 to 28, 1997. The following themes which were chosen at the previous meeting held in Adma, Lebanon (1996) were discussed.

1. Sacramental life in the Assyrian Church of the East, with particular reference to the Holy Leaven (Malka) and the Sign of the Cross.
2. The creed of Nicea-Constantinople, more precisely the procession of the Holy Spirit.
3. Blessed Virgin Mary who holds a very important position in both our liturgical and spiritual traditions.

The joint Synodical decree for Promoting Unity between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic

Church signed by Mar Dinkha IV, the Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East and Mar Raphael Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church was also discussed at this meeting.

The representatives of the Catholic delegation were -

1. Bishop Pierre Duprey, Titular Bishop of Thibar (Co-President)
2. Archbishop Cyrille Selim Boustros, Lebanon
3. Bishop Antoine Audo of Aleppo, Syria
4. Msgr Dr. Sarhad Jammo, Vicar General, U.S.A.
5. Fr. Dr. Mathew Vellanickel, Vicar General, Chenganacherry, India
6. Fr. Johan Bonny, Rome

I went to see the St. Peter's in Vatican which I had seen during my previous visits of 1962 and 1985. At the entrance a nun from Kerala greeted me. When I told her that I was from Thrissur, she instantly asked "Are you the Bishop of Thrissur who called me 'Angamalee Pig' when I was in Bombay some years ago?" Since it is not an appropriate synonym for a sister, I told her that it must have been the Catholic Bishop of Thrissur. The name of the Angamalee town reminds the people of Thrissur, a town where there are a lot of pigs. The exuberant nun from Angamalee did not feel offended by the remark of the Bishop of Thrissur.

Two sisters clad in the uniform (saree) of the Missionaries of Charity founded by Mother Teresa were seen inside the St. Peter's. One was a European and the other was an Indian. There

were a lot of tourists inside the basilica. Many were escorted by guides explaining the wonders of the basilica to people from many nations in English, German, French, Spanish, Italian and many other. It was like the Apostles speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost.

The guides are hardworking persons trying to whet the curiosity of the tourists. Michael Angelo is a name often repeated in Vatican. Samuel Clemens known as Mark Twain, the American humorist, writes in his work "*The Roman Guide*" that an American tourist lost his patience after hearing his guide's lecture on Michael Angelo and said, "Enough, enough, enough! Say no more! Lump the whole thing! Say that the Creator made Italy from designs by Michael Angelo." Mark Twain writes in his inimitable humour (*The Second Century of Humour*, London, pp. 915, 916)

"I never felt so fervently thankful, so soothed, so tranquil, so filled with a blessed peace, as I did yesterday, when I learned that Michael Angelo was dead."

The Colosseum is a tourist attraction in Rome. It was known as Flavian Amphitheatre. It was the family name of the Emperor Vespasian who built this theatre. Mr. K.P. Fabian, Indian ambassador to Italy, writes in *Indian Express* dated 14 November 1997, *Youth Express* p.2

The earliest reference to the Colosseum occurs in the writings of venerable Bede, the English scholar, historian and monk who quotes a prophecy which Anglo Saxon pilgrims were familiar with : While the Colosseum falls, Rome shall fall; when Rome falls, the world shall fall. Bede taught us to count years Before Christ. He died around A.D. 735.

Giving details of this colossal edifice, Ambassador Fabian (who hails from our state of Kerala) gives some useful information about the gladiators and the games conducted in this Colosseum.

The games started in the morning with a parade of gladiators, dressed in purple and gold cloaks driving around in the arena in chariots. Later, they marched around on foot, followed by slaves carrying their swords and plumed helmets, and the march ended in front of the Emperor's box where they shouted, 'Hail Emperor! We men who are about to die salute thee!

The crowd enjoyed the deadly show and used to scream and shout. A wounded gladiator who fell to the ground could appeal for mercy by casting aside his shield and raising his left hand. If the Emperor is not present, the opponent could kill him or spare him. When the Emperor was present, the decision was his. The spectators would scream out their preferences and the Emperor raises his thumb to signal reprieve or turn it down to mean the opposite.

The above article states that in addition to the gladiatorial combats there were other competitions such as boxing, archery, fights between charioteers and interestingly enough sword fights between women. I was thinking the sword fights were only for men. The news that in the good old Rome there were sword fights between women must be music to the ears of the 'women lib' activists.

The construction of the Colosseum began by the Vespasian when he was 60 years old in the year 70 A.D. and was inaugurated in 80 A.D. by his successor Titus. The inaugural festival lasted a

100 days. They killed about 5000 beasts as well as many gladiators in those festival days.

In October when we were in Rome it was very cold. But it was raining when I arrived. Even other days when we walked nearby we had to run to escape from rain, although not heavy like the Indian monsoon.

These unexpected rains provide jobs for Asians (perhaps Bangladeshis who appear like Indians) to sell umbrellas. They tried to sell umbrellas to me whenever it rained. But I have not owned an umbrella for the past many years. Since I travel by car from the porch of the residence I do not need an umbrella normally. I never enquire about the durability of these umbrellas as I preferred to run in the rain rather than to carry the burden of an umbrella. Nevertheless, for the sake of the visitors to Rome the following experience of our Indian ambassador to Italy, K.P. Fabian is worth recording. *Indian Express*, 22 May 1998, *Youth Express*, P.2.

“It rained cats and dogs near the Colosseum, and we sought shelter, the only umbrella we had was not good enough and we brought two umbrellas at Rs.200 each from Bangladeshis who probably had prayed for the rains. Amal who came in from Milan later that evening predicted that such umbrellas won’t last more than a fortnight. He was not wrong, they broke in less than forty-eight hours.”

Pope John Paul II, supreme Pontiff of the one billion (a thousand million) strong Roman Catholic Church is an attraction to visitors to Rome. Ambassador Fabian whose remarks are quoted above states that during the holy mass on Easter Sunday there was an estimated crowd of a quarter million people to

greet the Holy Father. Pope spoke in many languages including Tamil, Hindi, Urdu, Bengalee and Malayalam.

The present Pope who completed 78 years of age on 18 May 1998 broke the record of Pope Pius XII on 21 May to be the longest reign of Papacy in this century. He became Pope in 1978, less than two decades ago. Many pray him to be the Pope of the 3rd millennium who will complete 80 years of age on 18 May 2000 A.D.

Pope John Paul II was elected Pope on 16 October 1978. On 21 May 1998 he broke the record of Pope Pius XII and would be known as the longest reigning Pope of this century. Pope Pius XII had been Pope for 7152 days. On his 79th birth day (completing 78 years) John Paul II has 7149 days as the head of a billion-strong Roman Catholic community. The Roman Catholic Church reached a billion (one thousand million) population just recently. It is one sixth of the world population which is estimated to be 6 billion. All other Christians namely Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostalist etc. are less than a billion, probably around 900 million members. Christianity (Catholics and non-Catholics) has the largest followers among all religions. The Islam is the second in the world.

The main connection between India and Italy is through the Roman Catholic Church. The Vatican and around is full of the Catholic top leadership. Indian nuns and priests are also there. One Indian Cardinal (Lourdsamy, former Archbishop of Bangalore) also works there.

Another historical fact about Indian Italian relation is mentioned by the Indian Ambassador to Italy K.P. Fabian writing about his visit to Cajjano, in Campania, about 380Kms south of

Rome in 1998 to name a piazza after Mahatma Gandhi in a small town of only 3,100 souls. *Youth Express* 24 April 1998, p.2.

“A woman came and hugged me and said that in 1943 Indian soldiers were in Cajjano and she remembered getting chocolates from them. Well, our soldiers were part of the British Army, three brigades in all, say over 60,000. There are over 5,000 Indian graves in Italy. This was all part of the second world war.”

In Italy there are many thieves. True, Italy is a place where the Holy Father the Pope and many Cardinals and religious men and nuns live. But there are many robbers too. The *Indian Express* dated June 3, 1998 reports an armed robbery of the goods exported to Italy by Robert Vadra, son-in-law of Italian Sonia Gandhi, now President of the Congress party in India under the caption “*Vadra’s goods stolen in Sonia’s land*” in P. 11 we read:

New Delhi, June 2 : It was an unpleasant welcome for Robert Vadra’s consignment of exports in his mother-in-law’s country.

Armed robbers took away the consignment of handicrafts and semi precious costume jewellery worth \$ 14,000 when it was being transported from Rome to Milan on May 20.

The consignment was being handled by Alitalia even after it was off-loaded at the Rome airport.

“We have been handling consignments of a number of exporters and a robbery has never taken place before,” says Chandra. Chandra said Vadra would soon be filling the papers for claims.

“We will pay the compensation according to the airline’s rules,” Chandra adds.

NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE FOR DARIO FO

Stockholm, October 9 : Italian dramatist and actor Dario Fo won the 1997 Nobel prize for literature for the work which “emulates the jesters of the middle ages in scourging authority and upholding the dignity of the downtrodden”, the Swedish Academy said today.

In a sense which could have come from one of his own plays, Fo said he had been ‘stunned’ to learn that he had won the prize while driving along the highway from Rome to Milan in northern Italy.

“I learned it when another car pulled up to mine with a sign that said ‘Dario, you’ve won the Nobel,” he told a reporter who reached him on his mobile phone.

Announcing the award, the Swedish Academy said :

“For many years Fo has performed all over the world, perhaps more than any other contemporary dramatist, and his influence has been considerable.”

When Dario Fo was given Nobel Prize for literature in 1997 Vatican was not happy because Dario Fo has been a rebel. His dramas did not conform to the German tradition. *Indian Express*, November 2, 1997, *Spectator*, P.2 comments :

On the contrary, as Fo puts it, “By good fortune our Italian bourgeoisie has always shown itself to be more stupid than its counterparts in the rest of Europe. It did not devote as

much effort to destroying the cultural forms peculiar to the lower classes and to replacing their traditions, their rituals, their language in short, their 'vulgar' powers of expression and creativity, with the ruthlessness and thoroughness used by the French, German and English bourgeoisie. Perhaps, it wasn't able to."

CHAPTER 2

LEBANON

On 2nd March 1998 I flew from New Delhi by Gulf Air at about 7.30 a.m. and reached Bahrain at about 9.30 a.m. local time. Since the Bahrain time is 2½ hours behind the Indian time we had been up in the air for 4 and a half hours. The flight was pleasant.

Anna Maria Travels, New Delhi had seen to it that I would get Business Class (i.e., 'J' category) during my flight from Delhi to Bahrain. The special privileges of the Business Class passengers are not much useful to me. For example, the passengers in the Business Class are offered a wide variety of liquors to choose from. But one who does not taste any liquor the choice is equal to zero. There is room for arm rest. There are only two seats in the place of three seats. So it is one and a half seat for each passenger. Moreover there is more leg space. But my legs are not very long. The seat can be reclined almost like a bed.

At Bahrain we had a transit time of two and a half hours. An Engineer from Karnataka was travelling with his family to Cairo from Abu Dhabi where they work. He said that their pastor in the Evangelical Church is from Kerala.

About twenty young ladies from Sree Lanka were queuing up for the flight to Beyrouth. They look like housemaids. First I thought that they were nurses going to work in Beyrouth hospitals like many of our Kerala nurses who find green pastures in the Gulf countries. But these young ladies did not have the ability to fill up the cards for disembarkation. It is just to fill up their names, passport number etc. Although they know their

own names they do not know where and how to fill it up. There are some uneducated ladies from Kerala who go to the Gulf countries as housemaids, but the number of housemaids are less than the skilled nurses and technicians who go for employment.

There are a lot of complaints that these housemaids are not paid properly and the attractive salaries promised by the recruiting agencies in Kerala are never honoured by the Arab employers who is the real culprits in this exploitation. Is it the recruiting Agents or the employers who make profit by paying much less than the standard salaries? Perhaps there is a collusion between the recruiting Agents in Kerala and the Arab agents of the employers. At any rate it is the poor and the downtrodden who are being exploited in our society.

Gulf Air Flight No.911 was to take off from Bahrain at 12.05 noon. We boarded the aircraft and were about to take off. The cabin crew counted and found that a couple and their child who were on transit from Sydney, Australia were missing. After a frantic search they realised that there was no point in delaying our flight further. They decided to off-load their baggage as they had not shown up.

Delaying our flight the Gulf AIR authorities began to search the checked-in baggage of the missing family. They could not find any baggage. They got down all the passengers who had arrived from Australia and Singapore to identify their checked-in baggages. That was done. But no more baggage was left unattended. The pilot announced after 55 minutes that we were leaving without solving the mystery how the couple from Sydney could take away their baggage also when they decided suddenly to go out to visit Bahrain during their transit. Thus our wait of

55 minutes was in vain.

When our plane landed at Beyrouth airport, an announcement was made in the aircraft that somebody was waiting for Mar Aprem. I could easily recognize my name. But the message was not understood by me as it was in the Arabic language. Finally when I located the officer who had made the announcement I complained that whatever he had announced about me was of no use to me as he did not translate it into English. His reply was that when he heard the name Mar Aprem he guessed that I was from Lebanon and that was why he did not bother to announce it in English as well.

Nobody can blame him. Mar Aprem does not sound like an Indian name. It is the name of the Syrian poet-saint who died in 373 A.D. When we become bishops we are given the names of some saints departed from this world. Aprem is also the name of Ephraem, one of the twin sons of Joseph, the son of Jacob and grandson of Isaac.

From the foot of the tarmac I was driven in a special airport car to the VIP lounge. People were attending on me. I was the only VIP in the large lounge. My baggage was collected by others. My passport was stamped by immigration officials while I was comfortably seated in the VIP lounge. All these courtesies were made available to me under the special instructions of Msgr. Boulos Matar, Archbishop of Beyrouth. His Church, the Maronite Church is the major Christian denomination in Lebanon.

There was a long drive of more than one hour to Annaya, the famous place of the monastery of St. Cherbil. It is a tourist centre. We climbed the hills which gives us a panoramic view. The Shrine of St. Cherbyl, the Lebanese Saint is built on the

area where Fr. Cherbyl had spent his monastic life. His body lies buried in the Church.

‘Oasis St. Cherbyl’ is a hotel like resort in front of the Church. With central heating and hot water the stay at ‘the Oasis St. Cherbyl’ was pleasant. More buildings are being added. The church of St. Cherbyl is visible from a long distance as we drive to the hills. But when the new constructions are completed it can be seen even from a longer distance. The poor St. Cherbyl who died a hundred years ago (on Christmas eve 1898) must have climbed those hills on foot with much difficulty. Now tourists drive there by car comfortably.

On 3rd March 1988 I said Mass in the altar of the monastery chapel. We started at 7.30 a.m. and concluded around 8.15 a.m. As it was a week day there was no Old Testament lesson to be read. There was no sermon, no choir. It was a holy atmosphere and more over the warmth of the ecumenical understanding was there when I celebrated holy Qurbana in this venerated place where the body of the Lebanese saint lies buried.

Many sick people come to pray in this place where the body of the Lebanese monk is buried. He was not much known when this priest passed away in 1898. But after miracles began to be performed near his tomb it became a famous place. The greatness of this man is not due to any high rank he had held in the earthly hierarchy. He was no bishop. He was an ordinary priest. But due to his strict life of piety and poverty he grew to holiness. This thought made me to think about a life of piety.

After breakfast I said good bye to most of my fellow members of the Pro Oriente who shifted to the Archbishop’s House of Msgr. Boulos Matar who did the duties of the host to

this Syriac Commission meeting of the Pro Oriente. The President of Pro Oriente Alfred Stirnemann, Prof. Peter Hofrichter of Salzburg, Fr. Louis Zacko of Bagdad, Archdeacon Eshai Joseph of California, and Fr. Geevarghese Chediath of Trivandrum, India descended to visit the Biblical city of Byblos.

After these delegates left I got time to write down some pages for this travelogue. Then I walked around the area. Pilgrims began to come to the centre. Videos and cameras began to click. Some pilgrims came to me for my blessings. But I could not speak Arabic which is the main language spoken in Lebanon.

The scenic beauty of the area was superb. The church next to the monastery as well as the monastery are being renovated. This being the centenary year of the death of St. Cherbyl, there may be some colourful events.

His Holiness the Pope John Paul II had visited Lebanon a few months ago. So he may not visit again. But several dignitaries would visit that place in this centenary year. Patriarch Sefr, the head of the Maronite Church is a Cardinal himself like some oriental Patriarchs are. (The Patriarch of the Chaldean Church Mar Raphael Bidawid is not a Cardinal.)

On 3rd March 1998 two priests Fr. Saper Khamees and Fr. Yathron came to the Oasis of the St. Cherbyl to drive me to the Metropolitan's Palace in Beyrouth. The Metropolitan's residence is a four storeyed building. There is an elementary school in the first floor. There is a community hall and a medical dispensary in the second floor. The Metropolitan lives in the 3rd floor. The 4th floor has guest rooms etc.

This building is the result of the effort of Mar Narsai Metropolitan. In 1984 when I attended a holy Qurbana Service

conducted by him in Ealing, London, he told me that he was building a residence for the Metropolitan and a school. In 1985 he completed this building. It is spacious enough to hold some meetings, to accommodate some guests etc.

I quickly noticed some differences from the Metropolitan's Palace in Trichur, India where I reside. A Fax machine, Mobile Phone, Colour TV, washing machine, are provided. Perhaps the guest rooms here are useful. In India when I get a visitor I start telephoning to several people to find a room for a night for my guest and sometimes find a place in a hotel.

The modern Syriac Bible was re-printed by the Bible Society of Lebanon in 1993 A.D. It is a re-print of the translation published exactly 100 years earlier in New York, i.e., in 1893. To the question whether this Bible is approved by the Church of the East is answered by the general approval of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Church of the East, and of the Assyrians printed in the second page of this 1993 edition. The name of Mar Narsai de Baz, Metropolitan of Lebanon and all Europe is also mentioned.

The merit of this Holy Bible is that it contains references at the bottom of each page. At the top of each page in addition to the title of each book of the Bible, the year of printing is also mentioned. It gives some idea to the ordinary readers on the period of the people and events mentioned in the Old Testament or the year in which that particular book is believed to have been written. Of course it will not satisfy the scholars who critically evaluate the period of the writing of each book of the Bible.

The first book of the Bible, i.e., Genesis has 4004 B.C.

written on the top of it. The date on chapter 22 is 1892 B.C. when we come to the last chapter of Genesis, i.e., chapter 50, the date given is 1689 B.C. The next page, the book of Exodus begins with the date 1706 B.C. The last chapter of Exodus (i.e., Ch.40) is dated 1491 B.C.

The 3rd book of the Bible i.e., Leviticus begins with 1490 B.C. and continues to the 4th book. At chapter 16 of the book of Numbers the year is 1471 B.C. Chapter 21 is dated 1452 B.C. The 5th book (Deuteronomy) begins with 1451 and continues with Isho Bar Nun (Joshua). Chapter 12 and 13 are dated 1450 and Ch 14 began with 1444. The last chapter (23) is dated 1427 B.C.

1425 B.C. is the year assigned to the Book of Judges. Chapter 3 is dated 1406 B.C. Then it goes to 1276 B.C. Chapter 8 is dated 1249 and chapter 9 is 1209 and continues to 1206. Chapter 10 begins 1161. Chapter 15 begins in 1140. Chapter 17 is 1120. Chapter 18 is 1406 till the end of the book (ch 21).

The book of Ruth begins 1322 and ends in 1312. The book of I Samuel begins in 1171 B.C. and ends in 1058. The book of II Samuel is dated 1053 to 1017 B.C.

The book of I Kings begins in 1015 and ends in 890 B.C. The II Kings is dated 896 to 588. The Book of I Chronicles is dated from 4004 B.C. to 1015 B.C. The II Chronicles begins with 1015 B.C. and continues to 588 B.C.

The book of Ezra is dated 536 B.C. to 457 B.C. Nehemiah is dated 445 onwards and ends in 434. Esther is dated 521-410. The next book of Job is not dated. So is the following book *Mazmora* (Psalms) as well as Proverbs so is Ecclesiastes as well as Song of Songs.

Isaiah is dated 760 to 698

Jeremiah is dated 629 to 588

The Lamentations of Jeremiah is dated 588 B.C.

Ezekiel is between 595 and 574

Daniel begins in 609 and ends in 534

Hosea is 785-725

Joel is 800 B.C.

Amos is 787 B.C.

Obadiah 587 B.C.

Jonah 802-750

Micah 730-710

Nahum 713

Habakuk 626

Zephaniah 630

Haggai 520

Zachariah 520-487

Malachi 397

When we come to the New Testament the following dates are informative

Matthew 27-33 A.D.

Mark 26-37

Luke 33 years of Jesus

John 26-30 A.D.

The dates of the gospels are not the year each book was written. It was the dates of the activities of Jesus. The four gospels were written after the death of Jesus.

Acts of the Apostles give the dates 33 to 62 A.D.

The letters of St. Paul are dated 54 to 66 A.D. The three epistles of St. John are dated 90 A.D.

There is a New Testament in Modern Syriac re-printed in 1995 by The Bible Society of Lebanon. This New Testament has also the Psalms added at the end. Comparing the whole Bible printed in 1993 and the New Testament printed in 1995 I found there are some differences in the spelling. A simple difference I noticed in Matthew 20:19. The 3rd day of rising after the death of Jesus is mentioned. In the whole Bible the word three is written as *Thau lamath thau alap*.

In the modern Syriac language necessary changes are made, perhaps to shorten it or to simplify it. In the 1993 edition the third letter *thau* is marked with *Slitha* to sound it silent. Still all the letters of the old language (classical language) are written to make it easy for non-Assyrians to understand. Even if the silent letter 'thau' is omitted there is not much problem. But in 1995 edition the 'thau' is replaced by 'theith', then it is confusing.

The Assyrian Church in Lebanon is a small community, smaller than the Assyrian community in Syria or Iran. The Assyrian Church in Iraq, of course, is much larger than all the Assyrians in these three countries put together. There is no Assyrian Church in Turkey. After the first World War (1914-18) the Assyrians fled to south from their home land in Turkey. Many died in their way to Baquba refugee camp near Bagdad.

Mar Geevarghese Church was the first Assyrian Church in Lebanon. It was built in 1959. I visited that Church in August or September 1962 and had lunch with the leading layman of the community, Mr. Oraham Aziz. After 36 years of my first visit to that place I come to know that he is no more. I said hello to his daughter-in-law.

A young priest in Yonkers, New York was consecrated on 4 July 1968 as bishop of Syria and Lebanon. He was 28 and was the younger brother of Rev. Aprim de Baz, now archdeacon of Chicago. This young bishop Mar Narsai de Baz began to build the Church. He started an elementary school by the name Ecole St. George next to Mar Geevarghese Cathedral. The first floor of this building houses the school now. The young bishop stayed on the second floor. Then he built a third floor and moved his residence to it. The second floor is now occupied by a dispensary run by the Church. The 4th floor is like a guest house.

The 3rd floor where Mar Narsai Metropolitan lives now also has three extra bedrooms. I was staying in one of these bedrooms. It is convenient to hold some committee meetings also. Some convenience is necessary for bishops to accommodate not only bishops of our own denomination, but also leaders from other Churches in order to cope up with the ecumenical contacts these days.

Mar Narsai who was Episcopa from July 1968 to October 1976 was consecrated Metropolitan of Syria and Lebanon in Ealing, London, England when the present Catholicos Patriarch Mar Khanania Dinkha IV was consecrated to the highest rank in the Church of the East. Mar Narsai Metropolitan is now the Patriarchal Deputy. At the Synod held in Sydney, Australia in

1994 he was given the additional charge of Europe where the young bishop Mar Odisho Oraham is stationed in Norsborg near Stockholm, Sweden.

As there is no bishops in Syria now, Mar Narsai Metropolitan has to supervise the activities of archdeacon Geevarghese Athniel in Hassake, Patriarchal representative to the diocese of Syria. Archdeacon Athniel is busy completing the construction of the Marth Mariyam Cathedral in Hassake, Syria where I had the privilege of saying the Mass in 1996.

There are four churches and three priests and several deacons in Lebanon.

Vicar	Church
Rev. Saper Khames	1. Mar Geevarghese Church, Sadotal Bochrich
Rev. Yathron Gilyana	2. Rabban Pithyon Church, Hadeth 3. Beth Khannanya Church, Asheafiet
Rev. Aram Neesan	4. Mar Zaya Church, Zahle

On Sunday 8 March 1998 after Qurbana in Mar Geevarghese Church the priests accompanied me to the convent where two nuns from Kerala belonging to the Missionaries of Charity founded by Mother Teresa were working. They were happy to talk to me in Malayalam.

Then we went to Harissa. The shrine of our Lady was begun in 1904 by Mgr. El Hock the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East and Mgr. Carlos Duval the Apostolic Delegate of Lebanon and Syria in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the declaration of the Immaculate Conception.

The shrine was consecrated on the first Sunday of May 1908, which Sunday remains the annual feast of Our lady of Lebanon.

The bronze statue painted white was made in Lyon, France in 7 pieces. Weighing 15 tons, it is 8½ meters high and rests on a pedestal of 20 meters. While the priests decided not to climb the huge pedestal of 20 meters height, the deacon and myself climbed to the top from where I could see the ships in the sea.

The construction of the shrine was committed to Fr. Shoukrallah Khoury, Superior of the Lebanese Missionary Congregation (Kremist), later bishop of Tyre. This congregation has from the beginning officiated the shrine and have carefully carried out the founder's wish namely the spreading of devotion to Holy Mary for the salvation of souls and the protection of the Lebanese Nation.

While browsing through the books I saw the Literary History of the Assyrians (*Thash'itha d siprayutha*) Vol II authored by Dr. Pera Sarmas (published by the Assyrian Youth Central Society Press). I was happy to note in p.283 the name of an Indian priest from Pampakuda, Kerala. Cor episcopa Mar Mathai Konat (1860-1928) was mentioned. 'Mar' is a mistake in his name as 'Mar' is a title used by bishops only. Mathai Konat was a priest in the Orthodox Syrian Church in Kerala. He was a great scholar in Syriac language indeed. He knew not only the western Syriac, but also the eastern Syriac. He testified in the civil suit against Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan filed in 1911 as to the genuineness of the codification of the canon law codified by Mar Abdisho Metropolitan in 1291 A.D. He certified to the civil court in Trichur, "This book of Mar Abdisho is just like the book

of Hudaya canon of Bar Hebraya is for the Syrian Orthodox.” His Syriac books listed by Dr. Pera Sarvas are

1. Grammar of Syriac language
2. History of the Church
3. Magazine in the name of Treasury of Lives

Other Assyrian authors mentioned as the contemporaries are the following scholars belonging to the Syrian Orthodox, Chaldean as well to the Assyrian Church of the East.

1. Qashisha Paul Bedjam (1838-1921)
2. Metran Yakob Augin Manna (1867-1929)
3. Qashisha Yoseph Kellaitha (1880-1955)
4. Qashisha Alphonse Mingana (1881-1931)

Among present writers the name Daniel, son of Shamasha David Benyamin of Ashitha (Born in 1927) is mentioned. He lives in Chicago.

Actually Cor episcopa Mathai Konat ought to be mentioned in the previous chapter entitled Western Assyrian authors and not where it is mentioned now.

After reading the book on Colloquial Syriac by R. Hart I read another book by another Hart. This author is Michael H. Hart and the title of his book is *The 100*. The sub title reads ‘A ranking of the most influential persons in history. It is published by Galahed Books in New York city in 1982. The copyright is to Hart Publishing Company, Inc, 1978. I was curious to know who all are included in the top 100 list in this book of 572 pages.

The top ten are the following

1. Muhammed (570-632 A.D.)
2. Isaac Newton (1642-1727 A.D.)
3. Jesus Christ (6 B.C.-30 A.D.)
4. Buddha (563-483 B.C.)
5. Confucius (551-479 B.C.)
6. St. Paul (4-64 A.D.)
7. Ts'ai Lun (R. 105 A.D.)
8. Johann Guttenberg (1400-1468)
9. Christopher Columbus (1451-1506)
10. Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Karl Marx is No.11, Lenin is No.15, Martin Luther is No.23. George Washington is 27, Adolf Hitler is No.35 while William Shakespeare is No.36. I picked up some more personalities from the list.

40. Plato (427-347 B.C.)
- 49 Michelangelo (1475-1564)
53. St. Augustine (354-430)
63. Joseph Stalin (1879-1953)
65. Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.)
80. John F. Kennedy (1917-1963)
84. Vasco da Gama (1460-1524)
89. Zoroaster (628-551 B.C.)

95. Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603)

99. Mahavira (599-527 B.C.)

100. Niels Bohr (1885-1962 A.D.)

The author has added a list of honorable mentions and interesting misses. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) is listed No.7 here just above Abraham Lincoln. Although the author refers to the achievements of M.K.Gandhi he thinks that Gandhi's right place is not in the list of successful personalities. His principles of non-violence are not very original because Gandhi admitted to having derived it from Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Christ. Moreover despite Gandhi's techniques of non- violence, "the world has seen the two bloodiest wars in all history." He concludes his comments on Gandhi, "Still, judging from what has occurred so far, Gandhi seems entitled only to an honorable mention, in this book." (p. 527)

As I have mentioned in my earlier book *Sermons From the Gospels* (published in 1988) that it is a pity the Mahatma Gandhi, the man of peace, was never given Nobel Prize while Henry Kissinger and other trouble shooters got it and the name of Bill Clinton has been repeatedly recommended for that coveted Prize and he might get it even if he loses the Paulo Jones, Lewinsky trials.

On Sunday 8th March 1998 we started prayers in the Church at 7.30 a.m. Some people were there with two priests and deacons. At 8.30 a.m. we started Qurbana. The choir of girls was ready by 8 a.m. which is the usual time for Holy Qurbana at the Mar Geevarghese Cathedral. I thought, it I would finish at 10.30 a.m. But it took some more minutes because it took along time to give communion to about 700 people.

The Church was full. Bishop Mar Bawai Soro, who had come to Beirut from Rome where he is doing his doctorate, was there to translate.

Actually I had told the priest that he would have to translate my sermon from English into modern Syriac. Since I knew that he would not understand any English I told him that he could use any word and deliver a sermon of his own.

Mahatma Gandhi has found a place among the top 100 influential personalities of the present century published by TIME dated April 13, 1998. The article entitled Mohandas Gandhi authored by Salman Rushdie states that "His philosophy of non-violence and his passion for independence began a desire for freedom that doomed colonialism."

This well written article in TIME about 'A thin Indian man with not much hair' throws light to the various aspects of his great personality. Born on 2nd October 1869 he was shot dead on 30 Jan., 1948. He is not related to the Italian Mrs. Sonia Gandhi whose father-in-law Feroz Gandhi was a Parsee (Indian Zoroastrian) while M.K. Gandhi was an Indian Brahmin from Porbander.

Concluding his assessment on M.K. Gandhi, Salman Rushdie agrees with what Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter stated, "More than his words, his life was his message". Rushdie writes :

"These days, that message is better heeded outside India. Albert Einstein was one of many to praise Gandhi's achievement; Martin Luther King Jr., the Dalai Lama and all the world's peace movements have followed his footsteps. Gandhi, who gave up cosmopolitanism to gain a country,

has become, in his strange afterlife, a citizen of the world: his spirit may yet prove resilient, smart, tough, sneaky and, yes, ethical enough to avoid assimilation by global MC Culture (and Mac Culture too). Against this new empire, Gandhian intelligence is a better weapon than Gandhian piety. And passive resistance? We'll see."

In the Religious Channel a Maronite Qasha was speaking. In addition to the religious channel there was news about bishops. Maronite Patriarch Cardinal Sefr is seen often on the TV. The Prime Minister Hariri attended a meeting which went on for about 7 hours in the headquarters of the Maronite Patriarch in Kerke on 7 March 98. Several bishops were present along with their patriarch. The Shia Muslim leader who was interviewed said that Kerke is not the headquarters of the Maronites only, but also of all Lebanese people.

Yonan Warda has been working for Mar Narsai for the past 21 years. In India I had more than a dozen cooks during the past 21 years. Some readers may envy me saying that I was lucky to taste the recipes of different cooks.

The wife and daughter of Yonan Warda came to clean the house. The problem of finding suitable servants is acute in India. It is expensive to find full time servants to clean the house. Mar Narsai Metropolitan told me that it would be very expensive if we are to employ full time cooks to stay at night also. Since Yonan Warda and family are to work for day time only it is affordable. Yonan is to help the Metropolitan to assist in the prayers.

In India the cooks in the both houses of the Metropolitan palaces are not Christians. They are members of the Hindu religion. It is a sign of the religious harmony in India since

St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus, began to convert Hindus in 52 A.D. The problem of servants is an acute problem in most families. The best thing is to do it ourselves. But Bishops do not have time to cook, even if they learn to cook which I do not know. Since women do not live in bishops houses, we have to look for male cooks.

As I was about to leave the airport of Beirut the warning for the passengers appeared as follows.

“It is strictly forbidden to bring illicit goods such as weapons, ammunition, drugs, and any publication or recording which is morally offensive to the general public.”

Alcohol permitted are

“Whisky, Champagne, Cognac is one liter other two liters.”

I did not inform my friend Archbishop Boulos Matar because I didn't want to give the trouble to him of asking the officials to open the V.I.P. lounge for me. I must record with satisfaction that I was shown all the courtesies due to a bishop. I was wearing my hat known in modern Syriac as *Koosietha*. My colourful clothes was a protection. Some people advise me not to display my cross or the religious clothes. A traveller should be in a civil dress according to some. I do not agree. I am told that I will have to comply with their advice if I visit Saudi Arabia. That is the reason why I do not wish to travel to Saudi Arabia.

Flight from Beirut to Bahrain was of a duration of 2 hours and 15 minutes. We took off from Beirut at 3.15 p.m. When we reached Bahrain, the time there was 6.30 p.m. instead of 5.30 p.m. Because the time in Bahrain, Kuwait etc. was one hour ahead of Beirut. As I was still keeping the Indian time on my

watch, now I have to deduct 2½ hours only instead of 3½ hours as I was doing during the past one week.

After a transit time of about two hours I got into another flight going to Doha and Abu Dhabi. The flight to Doha is only 45 minutes, leaving Bahrain at 8.50 p.m. and reaching Doha at 9.35 p.m.

The food served was light as the flight was an after dinner flight. Orange juice and a piece of cake were quickly served as there was no time to serve refreshments during this short flight of 45 minutes to Doha. Then the hostess came with bear. Since most of the passengers were Muslims there was not many passengers who took advantage of such a free offer.

MODERN SYRIAC LANGUAGE

It is like the Americans writing 'Nite' for Night. As a non-Assyrian trying to understand modern Assyrian language such changes in spelling are confusing. The languages grow. Rules of grammar sometimes are simplified. It is not static.

While staying with Mar Narsai Metropolitan I decided to learn a few words in modern Syriac. I began glancing through the book *Athoraya Swadaya* (colloquial Syriac) written by Lt. R. Hart M.B.E. published in the Assyrian Press in Mosul in 1926. I picked some easy but useful words.

lakhma	bread
gishra	bridge
Akhoona	brother
goora	big
taira	bird

kooma	black
dimma	blood
paghra	body
garma	bone
Ktava	book
daftar	(Accounts) book
tirway	both
shoosha	bottle
hamam	bath
digna	beard
mbooqiree	I asked
Khalta	aunt (sister of mother)
amta	aunt (sister of father)
hawa	air
bnoushe or } bgane }	alone
kreeba	angry
mjanil	answer
slootha	prayer
teema	price
shoovhara	pride
sahdootha	proof

qar'a	pumkin
Charag-d'sa'at	Quarter (time)
mbaqarta	question
mithra	rain
qrelec	I read
mgoobilec	I received
yameeses	rhubarb
yammeena	right
dooz	correct
eesaqta	ring
gawza	walnut
shakheena	warm
sa'at	watch
meeya	water
yooqra	weight
spai	good
khwara	white
bakhta	wife, woman
pokha	wind
panjara	window
doonye	world
timmal or yoma d'vire }	Yesterday

he	Yes
Zarda	Yellow
Zoora or } Jvanqa }	young
tlokhe	lentils
jarga	line
arya	lion
kawitra	lunch
shipteeya	melon
dirmana	medicine
Khalva	milk
Wazeer	minister
daqeeqa	minute
zooze	money
qaidamta	morning
yimma	mother
raba	much
qoorba	near
adeeya	now
Zaita	olive
bisla	onion
tanoora	oven

d'ganee	own (my)
taora	ox
sanjoo	pain
waraqa	paper
jada	path
qalama	pen
beebar	pepper
baseemotha or } boosama }	pleasure
qirtopa	potato
ramootha	height
lakha	here
rama	high
roomta	hill
Chale or } bizia }	hole
eeqara	honour
qana	horn
soosi	horse
Khimma	hot
sa'at (dana)	hour

hanagoota	humour
kipna	hunger
goora	husband
ana	I
in	if
lazim	important
bidyoota	ink
prizla	iron
sapar	journey
deyana	judge
chaidan	kettle
qdeela	key
qtillee	I killed
mshiqlee	I kissed
ashpazkhana	kitchen
skeenta	knife
g'khiklee	I laughed
tarpa	leaf

The Daily Star is a daily newspaper in English first published in 1952. The cost is LL 2000 which is about 50 Indian rupees. I looked at all the 14 pages to find out the word India on 4th March 98 to know the latest results of the general elections. I was disappointed to realise that all other countries do not pay

much attention to the greatest democracy in the world.

Every country has their own priorities and problems. The front page news was about the petrol crisis as the government has decided to levy LL 50 tax on every 20 litres of petrol. The petrol station had protested against this indirect tax. Finally government agreed to reduce the hike from LL 500 to LL 200. That is equivalent to Rs.5 in India for every 20 litres. We often complain in India against the hike in the price of petrol and diesel. Because it is not only the rich people who own cars are effected, but all poor passengers who travel by bus have to pay higher. The price of the vegetables also goes up because a large portion of the vegetables consumed in Kerala is transported from the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. Thus the price of bananas and vegetables shoots up when the petrol price goes up.

Lebanon being close geographically to the oil wells of the Gulf Countries I was under the impression that petrol price is not a serious problem there. The petrol dealers stated that “an increased burden was not justified because it did not reflect trends in international prices, which have been falling steadily”. He clarified that dealers have no money to pay the employees because they get only LL 100 per 20 litres after paying LL 200 station tax and LL 300 company tax.

35,000 American troops are ready in the Gulf to attack Iraq if it violates the agreement with the U.N. Out of 35,000 troops, navies are 18,000, the airforce personnel are 9,000 and soldiers are 8,000. Other military personnel amount to 2200.

ANSER TRAVEL at Armania Street in Beirut is one of the good travel agencies where Mar Narsai Metropolitan is making

is travel bookings. Anna Maria Travels in New Delhi had booked my flight from Beirut to Tehran via Bahrain and Kuwait. But the time of arrival in Tehran was 2.20 hours after midnight. It is not a convenient time for anyone to receive me at the airport.

The lady at the travel agency tried to see whether I could get a convenient time of arrival through re-routing. She noticed my ticket is limited to the Gulf AIR and not to any other airline. She tried via Abudabi but there is no seat available in that sector. She tried via Doha and succeeded in finding my arrival time in Tehran at 11.50 afternoon on Tuesday 11th March.

As soon as I returned from the travel agency I remembered that all problems are not solved. My visa is for a stay of only two weeks in Iran. As I re-confirmed my original booking of return from Tehran on 26th I have to find either an extension of visa by two days or to advance by re-confirmed return journey by two days. The tourists have to be very careful with the visa regulations. Usually travel agents check our passports to make sure about the visa. This warning is recorded here for the benefit of tourists. The travel agents will not be punished for the violation. Only the helpless tourists will be arrested in the alien country where there may not be anybody to help in such a time of crisis.

On 5th March 98 the night programme in local language includes news on India. I could not understand the contents of what was reading. But Mrs. Sonia Gandhi was on the screen. The C.N.N. news broadcast in English is always at 7 in the morning everyday. Iraq, Yugoslavia, Israel etc. have priority.

On 6th March 98 the C.N.N. reported about the trial of the English girl who was accused of the death of a baby named

Mathew Eapen. The mother of the baby is an American and the father is from my home state Kerala, as the name Eapen is found only in Kerala. Since the baby sitter girl who is the accused in this case is from England, there is a great support from the people in England in her favour who collected half a million dollars to prove that she is not guilty. The American prosecutors are trying to prove that Mathew Eapen, second son of the doctor couple working in the state of Massachusetts, U.S.A., died due to the carelessness of the babysitter and therefore she should be punished for the murder. I paid attention to this news item because I too was a babysitter during week ends, when I was a candidate for Doctor of Theology degree in Princeton during 1967-68.

Most people watch weather forecasting especially in cold countries with cooler climate. I did not like the 18 degrees or 19 degrees in Beirut on the previous days. Thus on 6th March I was happy to note from the TV screen that Beirut was having 21 degrees which was the same as New Delhi, India on that day. Of course New Delhi may have 21 degrees in March. But we in Kerala never see such a lower weather. It may be about 30 degrees in Kerala.

The television and other luxuries are available in Beirut. But TV sets are not manufactured in this country. It is imported from Japan, America etc. The one I use is SONY. The LBC is Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation. Reemi is a well known announcer in LBC. She is the cousin of Bishop Mar Bawai. Bishop Bawai's father's sister is the mother of this popular girl in the LBC television. Her father is a Lebanese, a Maronite.

DOHA

On 9th March 10 p.m. I arrived in Doha airport. The people at Hotel transfer desk took my passport and ticket. Many people were taking one week visa and others 2 weeks business visa. There was no need for me to obtain a visa. But to get out of the immigration is a problem.

“You will not get hotel accommodation as your flight is a short one. Still we will give you vouchers for dinner and breakfast in the airport waiting hall itself,” said the official. Later he said that he would check again. I have heard that passengers have to press for their rights. Last year when I was on transit in Kuwait, the Kuwait Airways took us to a hotel within the airport area. Usually if the transit time is more than six hours the Airlines would provide hotel accommodation. Here the transit time is about eleven hours.

“Okay, we will take you to hotel” the Gulf Air staff member said. His name is Robert. He belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church. He began to talk about his church in Beirut, as I told him about the Assyrians in Beirut. As there was another passenger trying to get a business visa it was easy for them to drive both of us together to the hotel. Robert offered to buy coffee for me and talk in the waiting hall. But the immigration police would not let him take me to that area as the visa or immigration formalities were not over.

CHAPTER 3

TEHRAN

On Tuesday 10th March 98 at about 12 noon I reached the Tehran airport. I was received by Mr. Shimson Maksoodpur, Cor-episcopa Dumara, Qasha Joseph and Qasha Ashur and some lay leaders in the pavilion where the guests of the government are received. Mr. Shimshon Maksoodpur who is a member of the Iranian Parliament representing the Assyrian Minority happens to be the President of the Church committee. There was one lady in the group. Alice Eshoye whom many call Rabbi Alice. She is the secretary of our church.

After I met the members of our Church in the Pavilion I was escorted to the Church building where arrangements had been made for my stay along with Deacon Romeo who is single. The priest stays in the lower storey.

On Sunday 15 March 1998 I celebrated Holy Qurbana in Mar Geevarghese Cathedral in Tehran. Our two priests namely Qasha Yoseph and Qasha Ashur and deacons assisted me. Mr. Shimshon Maksoodpur translated my sermon.

At the time of giving Qurbana a Moslem lady came to receive Holy Qurbana from my hands. Other women warned me and asked me not to give her communion as she is a Muslim. One suggestion was that she may be given bread, not blessed. The Muslim woman said, "No, I want that one" pointing her finger at the *peelasa* in the hands of the deacon. Finally she was sent back.

Mar Geevarghese Church is a large Church, built by the efforts of the present Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV when he was

bishop of Iran since 1962. There is another building near the Church which has the hall, committee room, Church office, library etc.

MARTH MARIYAM CHURCH, TEHRAN

At Sarbas street in Tehran we have a Church in the name of Marth Mariyam. It is about 9 Kms from Mar Geevarghese Cathedral which is in Tous Street. There are about 120 families living close to the Marth Mariyam Church.

Cor episcopa Dumara who was in Mar Geevarghese Church is the vicar for Marth Mariyam parish. He lives in the first floor of this three-storeyed building. This parish was started in 1979.

On sundays there is Qurbana in the Church and on Fridays they have sunday school (Friday School) in this Church.

On Friday 20th March we started Qurbana at 9.30 a.m. and finished at about 11.30 a.m. The breakfast in the hall took another one hour.

The Church was full during The Qurbana. Cor episcopa Dumara, Qasha Ashur Tamraz, Deacon Wilson Ruel and Deacon Roma Shavilof assisted. Qasha Yosip Rashidi, Deacon Romeo and Heevpadyaqna Banipal Benjamin were also there. Mr. Shimshon Maksoodpur who is the Assyrian member in the Iranian Majilis translated my sermon.

In addition to the three points from the gospel of the day I took a few minutes to tell them the history of our Church. I told them that about 120 years ago there were three bishops in Orumiah, Persia area. As nobody knew the history of the past century I deliberately mentioned the number of Churches, the number of priests, the number of families etc. They were very

happy to hear my account.

The Church had more than 33 thousand members in the three dioceses of Mar Yonan, Mar Yohannan and Mar Goriel. Now if the total membership of our Church is less than half of what it was in the days of our grandfathers it is our duty to rebuild our ancient Church.

The Hudra copied in Alkaye in Iran in 1611 A.D. in two volumes is kept in Trichur, India. It was used for printing Hudra in India in 1960.

This valuable manuscript was brought to India by Mar Elia Yohanna Mellus who worked in Trichur during 1874-1882. After his return from Trichur he became bishop of Aqra, north of Mousel, Iraq where he lived and worked in obedience to Rome. The Trichur Chaldean Syrians are sometimes called Mellusians because of this scholarly bishop Mellus as well as the Patriarch of Babylon Mar Joseph Audo VI who had sent Mar Mellus to India in 1874 to rule the Indian Church without the permission of Rome.

Cor episcopa Dumara is the first priest of this Marth Mariyam Church. When he became Qasha in 1978 he was ordained at Mar Geevarghese Cathedral. He was assistant to Archdeacon Abraham Askaro who emigrated to Australia. After one year in Mar Geevarghese Church, Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, who was continuing the episcopal supervision of Iran, appointed Qasha Dumara to the newly instituted Marth Mariyam Church as its Vicar.

Rabbi Mariyam Amirkhas is an active member of our Church. Alice Eshoye brought her to me because she speaks English. She has the experience of travelling in foreign countries

such as the U.S.A. and Japan. She is preparing for a French language examination. She offered to translate my book *Nestorian Missions* into Farsee. She was a member of the Assyrian Presbyterian Church in Tehran. After the death of her mother and brother, she joined the Church of her forefathers some three years ago. Since then she has helped our Mar Geevarghese parish.

Good News Bible Todays English version printed in 1978 is the one she uses. She complains about the English translation which she finds much different from the Assyrian language. She quotes Ecclesiastes, Chapter 11 verse 1. "Invest your money in foreign trade, and one of these days you will make a profit." It is the commercialisation of today that has influenced *Today's English Version*. Invest your money on water. She insists the English translation is wrong. This verse in the Assyrian Bible (printed in America in 1893 and reprinted in Lebanon in 1993) is as follows:

Dree lahmookh al patha dmiyya : sabab mbar raba yomane bith machhit leh.

She says our Church does not grant equality to women in many matters. When a girl and a boy are brought to the baptism service the priest insists that he will baptise the boy first and the girl second, even if the girl is older. Of course this is the rule of our Church, I explain. But these rules are not in the Bible. It is man made. The Holy Synods should grant equal right to girls as for boys.

"The property rights also should be equal. Now boys get double of what the girl inherits. It should be equal," she argued. I told her that one Mrs. Mary Roy obtained an order from the supreme court in India in 1986 permitting equality in the

inheritance for boys and the girls in the Christian families in India. This rule will apply to all Christians in India whether one is a Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant.

On Monday 16th March we went to see the palaces which are now places of tourism. We walked inside too. After buying the entrance tickets the priest and Rabbi Mariyam took me around.

1. *Kahe Millat* The Nation's Palace

2. *Kahe Sabs*. The green palace

Sade abad is the name for all palaces in this compound.

Kahe Millet was the home of Reza Shah, father of Mohammed Reza Shah, the last king who was overthrown in 1979. The second one known as the green Palace was the summer palace of the Reza Shah.

We saw the office of the Queen Farah. Riza Shah did not live in this palace which he had built. But after his death his son Mohammad Riza Shah resided there.

As we stood in the visitor's waiting room of Mohammad Reza Shah, the priest said, "Look, this is the room where the late Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun met Mohammad Reza Shah and requested to have an Assyrian member in the Majilis in Iran." There are dozens of uniforms, hats, shoes etc. worn by the Shah for display.

There were buses in this place to take the tourists from one place to another. When we enquired about the time of departure of the bus, the driver asked us to wait for half an hour. Rabbi Maryam said something and the driver made a

special trip instantly. Of course Maryam gave a tip for the quick action.

Motorcyclists escorted a car in our opposite direction. That was Raffsanjani, the former President of Iran who had come to one of the palaces for some consultation. As I was wearing my headgear and black gown the police might have thought that I too was an Ayatollah.

On Tuesday 17 March we visited the tomb of Imam Khomeini.

Ayatollah Khomeini took over the control of Iran in 1979 from Shah of Iran ending the royal rule. Therefore people are grateful to Khomeini and the freedom he brought from the royal rulers.

The burial place of Ayathollah Khomeini whom they call now Imam Khomeini is built up by huge buildings. It may look like a wonder like the Taj Mahal in Agra near Delhi which was the burial place of the wife of Shajahan, the Moslem Emperor of India in 17th century.

While returning from this place we stopped at the burial place of Christians. We were disappointed to see that the gate of the cemetery was closed. After waiting for sometime outside the gate we began to think of some possibilities of entering inside the locked cemetery. When we were about to return disappointedly, two boys came running. They opened the gate for us. They are two of the eleven sons of the caretaker of that cemetery. The boys asked us whether we needed *Kundur*. I guessed that *Kundur* is the Persian word for *Kundirikam* in Malayalam which means incense (*bisma*)

We went in front of the tomb of Panna, mother of our present Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. Panna passed away in 1968 when Mar Dinkha was episcopa in Iran. Patriarch's father now lives in San Jose, California.

I said prayers for the dead and placed some *Kundur* incense. The boys washed the tomb. Maryam Amirkhas placed some flowers which she had bought as we were going there.

I walked around the cemetery. Some are very expensive tombs. One tomb has a 6 foot stone on it. I asked why they have such a tall and heavy structure on the tomb. The two boys commented that perhaps the man buried there was a bad man. Therefore his relatives must have put a heavy stone on the tomb to make sure that he would not come out of his grave to create trouble in this world.

Every morning the devoted ladies of the Church known as *Marathe* came to cook my *sauma* (Lent) food with their smiling faces and willingness to help and serve made my stay really happy. Everytime they planned something tasty for me. I reminded them that tasty food is not the best for me, as I have diabetes. I announced that all fruits and roots were no good for me. Some one brought dried fig and told me that it was okay. Another priest brought for me mulberry. He says that mulberry is good for diabetes. I did not question their medical knowledge. I completely trusted them and ate a lot of dried mulberry.

In our conversation we had to struggle hard to make us understand each other. My ignorance of Farsee or the spoken Syriac did not deter me from asking many questions. When I enquired about something our *Marathe* wanted to tell about the character of somebody. She wanted to say that lady was like an

earthquake. She took the Bible and read the verse about earthquake. In Aramaic language it is *Raodhana*. She showed me by the sign language that one member of the Church behaved like a *raodhana*. How happy and satisfied she was when she succeeded in showing me the right place in the Gospels where the word *raodhana* is mentioned.

She realized that I understood the description she used about a peculiar character in the Church in Tehran.

VISITS IN TEHRAN

We visited different places of tourist attraction in Tehran. We went near the Tehran University where Friday noon prayers with speeches are held blocking all the roads in that area.

The American Embassy is an important building. That was taken over by the agitating students in 1979. Our Assyrian friends asked me what were the places I was interested to visit. I said "all Churches." They took me to the American navy Church.

There are Assyrian Presbyterian Churches and Assyrian Brethren Assembly. "How do they worship? Can I see?" I queried. My hosts say, "No, you are not expected to go." when I pressed them for more details, as a student of Assyrian Church history, they said, "If you insist, we will take you."

The U.S.embassy in Tehran is now running a school for the Revolutionary Guards. It was here Agrees Abdi aged 23, leader of the Organizations of Islamic Students along with some students took 52 Americans as hostages and kept them in captivity for 444 days. It was on November 4, 1979 the bearded militants siezed the American Embassy. In January 1998 President Mohammed Khatami made a call for cultural exchanges between

Iran and the U.S.A. to bring down the 'wall of mistrust'.

Barry Rosen who was Press Officer in the American Embassy and one of the hostages, now aged 54, and who now works as the Director of Public Affairs for Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City has agreed to arrange a meeting with Agrees Abdi, a columnist for *Salaam*, a Tehran newspaper. Thus the hostage and the captor had agreed upon reconciliation. Whether the whole of Iran and the U.S.A. will welcome such a reconciliation is yet to be seen. How happy the Iranians were when they defeated the Americans in the World Cup Soccer in July 1998!

I took my book *Colloquial Syriac* written by Lt. R. Hart published by the Assyrian Press, Mosul in 1926, to learn Assyrian words. Mar Narsai Metropolitan had given it to me in Beyrouth a week earlier and started copying the following words. I had copied many useful words in Beyrouth itself. But now in Tehran I began to learn more words given below. It begins with *Kalba* dog. In modern Assyrian the pronunciation is Chalba. In this trip I learned the expression *nasha d chalba*. It is the Assyrian equivalent of the English expression 'son of a bitch' or s.o.b. Recently I heard that it is written on the wall of a Veterinary College, where human beings learn to treat dogs. "It is an insult to dogs, if any one calls a man a dog."

Kishboona	account
Bar	after
Bar palga d'yoma	afternoon
Midrish	again
Darqool	against

Qlema	climate
Joolla	cloth
Qahwa	coffee
Qareera	cold
Rung	colour
Bitacwin	I am coming
Bit atin	I will come
Telee	I came
Rahat	comfortable
Poogadna	command
Mbooshilee	I cooked
Mbashlana	cook (noun)
Asakhta	copy
Ktana	cotton
Atra	country
Tawirta	cow
Sleeva	cross
Jama'at	crowd
Piyala or } Isteekan }	cup
Kheeyara	cucumber
Qazbi or } Khoormi }	dates

Khishka	darkness
Yoma	day .
Mota	death
Kalba	dog
Wajiboota	duty
Jalde	early
Khilee	I ate
Beta	egg
Dishmin	enemy
bassa	enough
barabar	equal
ramsha or } asirta }	evening
Toovsa	example
Mpakhalta	excuse
Timana	expensive
Zoda	extra
raba or } behadd }	extreme
Aina	eye
Baba	father
Mookhiba	favourite

Zdoota	fear
Khadcha	few
Tena	fig
Plasha	fight
Moochikhlee	I found
Priqlee	I finished
Noora	fire
Qamaya	first
Noona	fish
Bisra	flesh
Choochaga	flower
mekhoolta	food
Qissa	forehead
Moonshelee	forgot
Qal'a	fort
Azad	freedom
Doast	friend
Piqqa	frog
Ye'mish	fruit
Bagheha	garden
Doara	generation
Bit yavin	I will give

Shoosha	glass
Lezala	go (to)
Bit azin	I will go
Alaha	God
Hookma	Government
Savoona	grandfather
toop	gun
Unve	grapes
Ar'a	ground
Khimma	heat
Saghootha	health
Koositha	hat
Khidya	happy
Palga	half

THE NUMERALS IN FARSEE

The Persian numbers are very similar to Hindi. numbers have come to Hindi through Urdu, which is known as Persian Urdu

	Hindi	Persian
1.	ek	yek
2.	do	do
3.	theen	sch

4.	char	chahar
5.	panch	panch
6.	che	sesh
7.	sath	hafth
8.	aat	hashth
9.	nau	noh
10.	das	dah
20.	bies	biesth

The numerals 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 have no such similarity. Hundred, however, is *sau* in Hindi and *sad* in Persian. Thousand is *hazar* in Hindi and *azar* in Persian.

CHAPTER 4

OROOMIAH

Marth Mariyam Church in Urmia not only is one of the oldest Churches in Iran but also in the world. It is said that the Church had been built on the tomb of one of the three wise men who went to Bethlehem to study the star where Jesus was born.

This old Church which its name is been connected with wise men (Magi) in Assyrian language is called "Marth Mariyam". It is also said that this church can be considered as second oldest Church in the world as the first one was built in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. (in Koln, Cologne, Germany in 13 century a church was built which the personal belonging of these 3 magi are kept.)

The shape of the building is quadrangular with strong and heavy pillars which are made from Mortar stone. It is said that this Church has hidden ways but since no scientific study has been done. Therefore these hidden ways are not known.

The main door to enter the Church, all other Churches very small and few steps downwards will take you to the main hall. It consists of one altar, a few rooms and a few vestibule. The congregation used to sit on the floor and to sweeten the smell of inside they used to plant the fragrant plants. Icons are never used in this Church, as the members of the Church of the East do not believe in Icons.

In 643 A.D. a Chinese princess came to Urmia for the pilgrimage, and since the Church needed to be repaired she

donated some money and a piece of marble stone as her memorial was installed on the wall.

(MALEK DAVOOD The author of 'Mongolian History and patriarch Mar YAHEBALA III' narrates :

“Emperor TIT-SRANG To show his respect to Assyrians sends his sister princess Bapri along with high rank officials of Chinese to meet patriarch Ishou Yab II and to have some information about the manners and education system in Assyrian schools in Mesopotamia and Azarbiygan. The Chinese guests after visiting many schools, monasteries and houses belonging to Assyrians six months stay in Nineveh (now Mousel) took the route of Didna and Rovandouz reached Urmia.”

Marco Polo also visited the Church (1323-1356) and was very delighted to have the opportunity to have a short visit. Many of the Assyrian Church of the East believe in the Miracles done in this Church 'Light from the East Vol.4. No.2 Feb. March 1951.

Professor Abraham Jackson of Colombia University visited Urmia in 1903 and took pictures and believed that parts of the Church were built under the ground near to the ground of the present church.

Safanome Jackson

+ Itinerary of Jackson pictures, pages 288-289

* At the end of the 19th century, the Russian missionaries who had influence on the Assyrians residing in Urmia, decided to renew the front of the Church, they added many cupolas and a very big gong which gave special beauty to the church. Unfortunately in 1908 Ottoman troops conquered the city and

the church was ruined.

YOHANNAN A. *The Death of a Nation*, N.Y. 1917

Some comments of the historians of Urmia and ancient buildings.

From 1992 onward the Assyrians who had left Urmia gradually returned home. As to conduct the religious ceremonies they needed the Church, decided to repair the old church again. The members of the Assyrian Church of the East residing in the U.S.A. and the publication of 'Ashur' of New Jersey, financially helped the local people to repair the church.

This church is registered as National Relic and in 1912 Me. Abraham Odishoo from Gavilian Village donated a big gong to the Church.

In 1834 Dr. J. PERKINS, American Missionary with Frederick Hess of Basel Mission were residing in one of its vestibules.

In April 18, 1841 an American Protestant was ordained by Dr. Perkins. In April 18, 1918 Mar Poulos Shimon was consecrated as the patriarch for the Assyrian Church of the East, in this Church. In August 1886 one of the high officials of Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission namely Rev. A.J. Maclean resided in Urmia and spoke to the people about the aims and goals of Canterbury's Mission, To help the Assyrians economically and educationally. The name of the persons who have been buried in the yard of this Church are :

Deacon Isha, brother of Mar Ruvil Shimun

Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East (1864)

Mar Youkhana, bishop of Gavilan parish and Urmia - He is the first Iranian National to visit America in 1841. He passed away on 16 May 1874. Mar Ilia Ebrahimi Armodaghaj, bishop of Urmia who died in 1938, and two Russian priests. One of them died in 1898.

After Mar Elia died there was no bishop of the Church of the East in Iran until February 1962 when Qasha Khanania was consecrated bishop of Iran by Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. The new bishop was called Mar Khanania Dinkha. He continued to stay in Tehran. Since his elevation to the rank of the Catholicos Patriarch on 17th October 1976 there is no bishop in Iran.

The Chaldean Church which Mar Yohannan Issaye built was perhaps the first Christian Church in Tehran in the early 50's. The Archbishops took us to show the Church. At tea time our priests had to say "no thank you" because they were not eating anything till evening in the Lent season. I took tea saying no to milk and sugar, milk owing to the Lent and sugar due to my diabetes.

The relationship between the two Churches should improve. My readers should forgive me if the above remark sounded negative. But as one who believes in improving relationship at ecumenical level and as both Patriarchs (H.H. Mar Dinkha IV and H.H. Mar Raphael Bidawid) are determined to explore possibilities of co-operation between our Churches we all should pray to God to lead us in the right direction.

Although in Iraq Chaldeans are more in number than the Assyrians, in Iran the opposite is true. The Assyrians outnumber Chaldeans including the Presbyterians of the same race. It is estimated to be 30 thousand. In Iraq this figure will be 13 times

more, i.e., about 400 thousand. It is impossible to satisfy everybody with the numbers. Many people claim that they are more than what outsiders think they are. Personally I try to be closer to the truth. What is the use of saying that the Assyrians and Chaldeans in Iran are 90 thousand, if we are only 30 thousand?

The Chaldeans have another archbishop in Iran. He is Mar Thoma Meram, archbishop of Urmia and Salamas. The following Sunday i.e. 22nd March I was in Urmiah our people had arranged a visit for me to the Chaldean Archbishop. A French father and an Iranian priest were there to receive me. Archbishop Mar Thoma Meram was happy to see me. He is fluent in English so much so when we returned our priest Qasha Daryawesh remarked in surprise "Mar Aprem, now we know how fast you can speak English". It was true. We both were in top gear on full speed. I did not pay any attention to commas, semicolon, and even to full stop. I felt I had a lot to share and lot to learn from a bishop who lives where the Assyrian Church has a great history. We had no bishop in Urmiah to tell about it and even our Archdeacon, priest, deacons and others were not fluent in English to tell me.

In addition to the three Archbishops mentioned already there is another archbishop namely Mar Hanna Zoro. He is the archbishop of Ahwaz in Iran. I am told that he lives in Canada. The Chaldeans have bishop in America. He is a bishop Ibrahim Ibrahim of the USA, stationed near Detroit. Ahwaz has priests and believers belonging to the Chaldean Church. The Assyrians have some members in Ahwaz, but no priests or parishes. Ecumenical co-operation is a must.

CLERGY IN IRAN (TEHRAN & URMIYAH)

- 1. Cor episcopa Dumara Benyamin
- 2. Qasha Joseph Rashidi
- 3. " Ashur Tamraz
- 4. Shamasha Romeo Ishuyi
- 5. " Wilson Ruel
- 6. " Rome Shavilof
- 7. Heevpadyakna Banipal (Son of Qasha Dumara Benyamin)
- 8. Shamasha Khoreish Benyamin, Rome
- 9. Archdeacon Aprim Mar Yonan, Urmiyah
- 10. Qasha Daryawesh Azizian "
- 11. Deacon Edwin Babilla "
- 12. " David Davidoff "
- 13. " Sargun Kallu "
- 14. " Charles Catholic "
- 15. " Edick Banno "
- 16. Heevpadyakna Meeshal Khano
- 17. " Ramson Yohanna

FORMER PRIESTS

- 1. Qasha Aprem Yalda, Tehran
- 2. " Malkeshdek Kochali, Urmiah

3. Qasha Havel Abraham (died USA)
4. " Benyamin (died USA)
5. " Shmouel beth Kollia (died in Urmiah)
6. " Ruvel Arsanis, Urmiah
7. " Shmouel (died in Abadan)
8. " Kishthu, Urmiah 3 July 1977
9. Archdeacon Abraham Askaro (Australia)
10. Rev. Shimon, U.S.A. died in America (Tyaraya)
11. Rev. Athur, Qasha died 1985
12. Qasha Michael (Pageaye near to Eiyal & Mar Bisho)
13. Qasha Esthapanose (England) & Qasha Michael
were ordained on the same day in 1989
14. Shamasha Isha (deacon for Mar Ishaq Khananisho)
15. " Haroutha (deacon of Mar Benyamin)
16. " Isho Beth Kollia (Bro. Kespa Shmouel)
17. " Haido Dimaye
18. " Sieemon
19. Qasha Sicvu
20. Yoseph

DEACONS IN TEHRAN

1. Deacon John Khamees

2. Deacon Charlie Jowid

3. Athor

Mr. Yoseph Mar Yohannan from Gavilan, Chairman of the Committee in Urmiah.

IRAQ - IRAN WAR, 1980-88

About one million people from Iraq and Iran died during the war of 1980-88. When I visited Iraq in 1990, two years after the war I was sad to hear that some prisoners of war were still in prison. The son of Col. Yosep Khoshaba was major in the Iraq army and was still a prisoner when I visited Col. Yosip Khoshaba in 1990.

When I visited Iran in 1998, i.e., ten years after the war I heard that still there are thousands of prisoners of war in the prisons. I was happy to read on 9 April 1998 in the Malayalam newspaper *Deshabimani* that on 2nd April both Iraq and Iran agreed to exchange their prisoners. Within one week, 4,000 prisoners were released. 3,800 of these were Iraq nationals. Many more Iraqi's are still in prisons in Iran. There are only very few Iranian soldiers in Iraq. This is a good sign that Iraq's foreign minister visited Iran in January 98 to speed up the release of the prisoners of war.

According to the new agreement signed by these two countries Iraq will release 380 prisoners and Iran will exchange 5592 prisoners of war. The total number of prisoners released after the ending of the war on 8.8.88 will be 70,000.

The new friendship between Iraq and Iran is to face the

threat of Israel aided by America. America is not happy about these new happenings in the relationship of two Muslim neighbours namely Iraq and Iran.

Ever since the war broke out between Iraq and Iran in 1980 Iraq had not allowed Shia Muslims of Iran to visit their holy places Najai, Karbala etc. But in 1997 Iraq gave permission to the pilgrims from Iran to visit their holy places. Although President Saddam Hussain is a Sunni, the majority of Muslims in Iraq are Shias like Iranians.

Around the year 1842, there were four bishops and many Churches in Ooroomiah. Rev. George Badger in his book *The Nestorians and their Rituals* Vol II p. 399 states that Patriarch Mar Shimum did not know the names of those villages in Ooroomiah. But according to the estimate of the Partriarch there were about 4,500 families in Ooroomiah area.

There were seven Metropolitans and even seven Bishops and 188 priests. There were 249 Churches with 11,378 families. This Badger calculates as 70,000 souls. He thinks it is a low estimate.

The following list of bishops and people of about 150 years ago is useful for us today to know. The dioceses were listed along with the names of Bishops. p.399

Recapitulation

	Metro	Bishops	Priests	Churches	Families
Diocese of Mar Auraham	1	0	9	13	249
-do- -do- Yeshua-yau	1	0	18	20	348
-do- Buhtan	0	2	16	23	220
-do- Mar Shimoon	0	0	62	75	2,778
Patriarch					
-do- Mar Serghees	1	0	24	37	1,979
-do- Mar Sleewa	1	0	18	34	1,082
-do- Hnan-Yeshua	3	5	34	38	4,500
-do- Ooroomiah & c.					
Districts of Lewun and Noodes	0	0	7	9	222
Total	7	7	188	249	11,378

Looking to the second half of the 19th century the book by another Anglican missionary, the Rev. E.L. Cutts D.D. is useful. In *Christians Under the Crescent In Asia* published by S.P.C.K. London we get the history of the Church around 1877 A.D.

In the Appendix to this book we find a statistics of the Assyrian Church of his time.

I. *The Diocese of the patriarch Mar Ruwil Shimun*

1. West of Ashitha in Mosul
2. Lower Tyari

3. Upper Tyari
4. District of Walto
5. Province of Dez
6. Berwar of Kochanes
7. Berwar of Shwawootha
9. Bilijnaye

II. *Diocese of Mar Sargis of Jelu*

1. Tehoma (Goondooktha etc.)
2. Province of Jelu
3. Province of Baz
4. District of Rekan

III. *Diocese of Mar Sleewa of Gawar*

1. Province of Gawar
2. Derrenaye (Mar Bishu, Iyyel etc.)
3. Khananes
4. Province of Albak
5. District of Lewun
6. Noodes
7. Teall District

IV. *Diocese of Mar Khnanesho, the Metropolitan*

1. Village of Halana, Kiatuna, Shaput, Dara etc.
2. District of Bradusnai

OROOMIAH

V. *Diocese of Mar Yohannan*

Villages of Gavilan, Arduk, Karajalu, Naži etc.

VI. *Diocese of Mar Yonan*

Villages of Superghan, Chaneshan, Mushawa etc.

VII. *Diocese of Mar Goriel*

Villages of Ardishai, Takia, Alkai, Bahari, Gaktapa, Karaghoy, Gulpashan, Digala etc.

It is to be noted that Turkey had four dioceses and Persia had three.

It had a total of 290 Churches 248 priests and 10,638 families. Counting seven to a family Rev. Cutts statement concludes that the total number of Assyrians at that time were 74,466.

Some would say along with the traveller Ainsworth (Travels in Syria etc.) that a Syrian family in the last century had an average of eight members. Anyhow the total number of the Assyrians around 1880 is about 80,000.

The separate figures of each bishop is also useful.

	Churches	Priests	Families
1. Patriarch	88	81	2,274
2. Metropolitan	43	36	1,067
3. Mar Sargis	38	37	1,650
4. Mar Sleewa	56	43	1,497
5. Mar Yohannan	23	22	972

6.	Mar Yonan	2	1	290
7.	Mar Goriel	40	28	2,888
<hr/> Total		290	248	10,638

Out of 290 Churches the Assyrians had, Mar Geevarghes tops the list.

The top ten names are the following.

1.	Mar Geevarghese	63
2.	Marth Mariyam	61
3.	Mar Kuriakose	26
4.	Mar Yohannan	13
5.	Mar Shallitha	12
6.	Mar Shimun	9
7.	Beni Shimoni	8
8.	Mar Esthapanose	7
9.	Mar Sargees	5
10.	Mar Sawa	5

Mar Thoma, Mar Savrisho, Mar Slewa had 4 Churches each. Others had 3 or less.

Mar Thoma is the doubting Thomas, disciple of Jesus who around 32 A.D. came to Urmiah and baptised many people. The tradition says 3,000 people were baptised. St. Thomas took water from the Lake Urmiah in his hand and threw over the believers. When he took water from the lake there was a sign or mark of a decrease in water.

The same tradition is heard about both lakes. Is the Indian tradition or the Iranian tradition genuine?

The other small Churches in this area are

1. Mar Thoma, Babylon
2. Geevarghese, Hakie
3. Rabban Hormizd, Das gire
4. Marth Maryam, Kari Batha
5. John Vilson, Presbyterian
6. Mar Shallitha, Hsila Ashok
7. Marth Maryam, Charbash
8. Mar Kuriakose, Yah Maraluse
9. Mar Kuriakose
10. Mar Bishu of Kella Kasha Oone
11. Mar Geevarghese, Genise
12. Mar Esthapanose
13. Malakha Goriel
14. Mar Zaya
15. Mar Geevarghese
16. Mar Thoma, Urumia

I went to visit the Churches on Sunday and Monday. As my desire to visit this area was great because our Hudra dated 1611 A.D. was copied in Alkaye in Iran.

The sad news of the sudden demise of Bishop Poulouse Mar

Poulose made me to cut short my stay. I took the morning flight instead of the afternoon flight from Urmiah to Tehran hoping to get the flight to India immediately. But flights from Tehran to other destinations on Tuesday had left.

But there was one flight to Dubai. But connection from there to India on Wednesday was impossible. The Kuwait Airlines could offer me a flight to India the earliest on Saturday. But I had my confirmed seat in the Gulf Air on Thursday which would take me from Tehran to Bahrain and to Trivandrum by midnight.

I telephoned to India and asked for a flight from Trivandrum to Cochin on Friday to save a couple of hours. From Cochin I still had to travel 2 hours by car to reach Trichur.

Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV telephoned me on Wednesday night and told me that Mar Narsai Metropolitan would arrive in Trichur on Thursday before I arrive. He concluded his call by telling me, "Take care of your health". Yes, I know that I should be often reminded of this reality because I usually neglect caring my health saying that God takes care of my health, as I am at his service. It is our duty to take care of our health.

On Thursday 26 March 98 Mr. Shimshon Maksoodpur and members of the committee along with Cor episcopa Doomara and our two priests (Rev. Joseph and Rev. Ashur) bid good bye at the pavilion. Rabbi Alice Ishoye, Secretary of the Church office too was there.

Patriarch's sister Virginia and members of the women's committee wished me a safe journey by coming to the Church house where I was staying. Those ladies had shown too much kindness to me to cook me food, wash my clothes and to see that I go back happily.

The Gulf Air flight took off at 6.30 p.m. and I was scheduled to reach at Bahrain at 6.50 p.m. I guessed that the flight time may be 50 minutes as the time difference between Tehran and Bahrain is 30 minutes. But I was wrong. It was one hour and 30 minutes, because on March 22 we had changed one hour in Iran for summer time. Thus the flight time to Bahrain was 1 hour 50 minutes. Even the pilot in the flight made a wrong announcement that the local time in Bahrain is 6.20 p.m. Then he corrected himself that it was 7.20. I was not bothered much because my watch had Indian time which was 9.50 p.m.

As I was a VIP passenger flying using the privileges of the government guests at the Pavilion, my seat was in the row number one in the economy class. But before the flight the steward told me that I could move up to the Business Class as there were some seats free in that section.

The hostess in the first class came to me and asked me who I was. She said that she was from Bombay in India and had not seen anybody in this strange attire with hat. I explained to her about our Assyrian Church. She said that it was a news to her that we had Christians in Iran.

While waiting at the Bahrain transit area one Thomas greeted me. He said that he is the nephew of Bishop Joseph Mar Iranaeus. He works in Dubai and came to Bahrain the previous day and is on way back to Dubai. He told me that he had learned about the death of Mar Poulouse from TV in Dubai.

A Moslem from Iran going to Muscat offered me some biscuits (real one, not gold biscuits). He began to talk with me in Pharsee and Urdu. I repeated the few words I picked up in Pharsee language during the past few days.

A man is playing piano in the transit area to entertain the passengers who had to spend a few hours waiting in transit.

On Friday 27 March I reached Trichur and joined prayer on the burial of bishop Mar Poulose to be held on 28th March 1998.

- The End -

Correction : The photograph on page 104 is that of Mar Geevarghese Church in Sangar Village in Urmia and not of Mar Zaya Church in Guktapa.



Beirut



Pigeon Rock





Qasha Khamis, Mar Aprem, Qasha Yathron in the Maronite Shrine of Marth Maryam in Harissa near Beirut. 8 March 1998.



Cor Episcopa Dumara, Mar Aprem, Qasha Yosip and Mr. Shimsh
Maksoodpur (Member of Parliament in Tehran) March 1998.



Cor Episcopa and Mar Aprem and ladies, Tehran, March 1998



Children singing welcome song on the evening of 19 March 98
at the Church hall in Tehran.



Reception to Mar Aprem by youth group in the Church in
Tehran, 19 March 1998.



With young people at the Church Hall



Praying at the tomb of Mrs. Panna, Mother of Patriarch
Mar Dinkha IV who died in December 1968.
Maryam Amirkhas and Qasha Ashur.



Members of the Women's society of the Church in Tehran
meeting Mar Aprem, 18 March 1998.



Mar Aprem holding the two framed gifts presented by
the women. On the right is Mariam Parno.



Archbishop Isaiah (85 Year old) and Archbishop Ramsi Garmo of the Chaldean Catholic Church with Qasha Yosip.



The Archbishops with Shimshon Maksoodpur, Assyrian member of the Parliament.



St. John's Centre, Tehran.



Scholars from different Churches co-operating with
St. Johns Ecumenical Research Centre.



Sweeny, Daughter
of Jacqueline,
Daughter of Virginia
• Sister of Patriarch
Mar Dinkha IV.
19 March 1998.



At the entrance of the
Palace of Shah,
Tourists' Centre.

Tomb of
Imam Khomeini



Two relatives of
late Mar Abimalek
Imotheus Metropolitan.





After qurbana at Mar Marth Mariyam
Church in Urmiah on Sunday 22 March 1998.



With Arch Deacon Aprem, Cor Episcopa Dumara and Priest Daryavesh, 3 Deacons and 7 year old altar boy Raymond.



With Qasha Daryavesh, Deacons, Edic, Charls Catholic and David Davidoff, 22 March 1998.



With clergy and choir girls after Qurbana At Marth Mariyam. Uroomiah - 22 March 1998



Mar Sargis Church near Uroomiah on 23 March 1998



Church of Benei Shmonie, Sathaqa.



Mar Zaya Church, Guktapa near Uroomiah. Elia, son of late Qasha Shmuel Beth Kollia is standing second left of Mar Aprem.



Marth Mariam at Chameki, 25 Kms. from Uroomiah
Tombstone out side the church 23 March 1998.



Wazirabad, Mar Geevarghese Church, two children Zaya and Benita (Daughter of Yosip Kasha Yohannan).



Mar Sargis and Mar Bachus Church near Urumiah.



Mushava (Mushiabad) Mar Savrisho Church.



Mar Sargis and Mar Bachus Church





Chaldean Arch Bishop Mar Thoma Meram between Mar Aprem and Archdeacon Aprem.



Mar Shallitha at Sathaqa near Uroomiah



Ada Gora. Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church.



Mar Gevarghese, Saatlloovi near Urmiah, Presbyterians and Catholic Chaldeans also in this Church.

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- 2 Mar Abimalek Timotheus-A Biography pp. 282, 1975
- 3 Mar Abdisho Thondenat pp. 136, 1987
- 4 Strange But True: An Autobiography pp. 236, 1981
- 5 Not So Strange: An Autobiography Part II pp. 236, 1991

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- 6 Nestorian Fathers (out of print) pp. 168, 1976
- 7 Nestorian Missions (Reprint 1985) pp. 134, 1876
- 8 The Chaldean Syrian Church in India pp. 241, 1977
- 9 The Council of Ephesus of 431 pp. 196, 1978
- 10 Sacraments of the Church of the East pp. 142, 1978
- 11 Nestorian Theology pp. 183, 1988
- 12 Nestorian Lectionary & Julian Calendar pp. 140, 1982
- 13 Western Missions Among Assyrians pp. 152, 1983
- 14 A Nestorian Bibliography pp. 128, 1982
- 15 Indian Christian Who is Who pp. 210, 1982
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- 21 From Bagdad to Chicago pp. 168, 1985
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- 25 The Assyrians in Iraq pp. 112, 1990
- 26 Germany Via Vienna pp. 140, 1991
- 27 Washington to New York pp. 133, 1992
- 28 London to Moscow pp. 134, 1993
- 29 Los Angeles To Tokyo pp. 136, 1993
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- 31 Salzburg to Boston pp. 140, 1995
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- 33 Hassake To Hollywood pp. 112, 1998
- 34 Italy, Liban & Iran pp. 112, 1998

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| 36 | Laugh with the Bishop (Bombay) | pp. 95, 1988 |
| 37 | Laugh to Health (C.L.S., Madras) | pp. 82, 1992 |
| 38 | Holy Humour | pp. 104, 1993 |
| 39 | Joy to the World | pp. 104, 1994 |
| 40 | Holy Smile | pp. 100, 1997 |

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| 44 | Sermons from the Gospels Vol. 1 | pp. 208, 1988 |
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Mar Narsai Metropolitan interprets the speech
of Mar Aprem Into Assyrian. Beirut- March 1998.